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WELCOME NOVEMBER 2020

There was far more to the Vikings than simply raiding and warfare

When we think of the Vikings, some of us might conjure an image of marauding, barbaric raiders, intent on pillaging and violence – not to mention horned helmets! **In this month's essential guide, we explore the many other sides of Viking life** – from the role of women and spiritual beliefs, to shipbuilding and trading, to the great exploratory journeys across the seas that took them as far as North America. Turn to page 26 to find out more.

In November, millions of US voters will take to the ballot boxes to decide the next US president. To mark the occasion, **we've cast our eyes back to the election of 1952 to explore the remarkable life of Charlotta Bass** – the newspaper publisher and activist who faced down the Ku Klux Klan and racial discrimination to become the first woman of colour to run for vice president. Read her incredible story from page 65.

Elsewhere, we **examine the history of the United Nations, 75 years after its creation** (*page 21*), discuss what might have happened had Japan not attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941 (*page 70*); discover how Benito Mussolini came to establish the first one-party fascist state, in Italy (*page 56*), and **discover what life was like for European immigrants living in the slums of New York** at the turn of the 20th century, through the lens of Danish social documentary photographer Jacob Riis (*page 58*).

Plus, 400 years after it dropped anchor in the New World, we take a closer **look at the voyage of the *Mayflower* and the plight of the Pilgrim passengers on board** (*page 18*), and answer some intriguing historical questions – **just what did happen to failed Kamikaze pilots?** Find out on page 73.

Finally, don't forget to **check out this month's great subscription deals, which could see you receive a free book worth up to £30!** Turn to page 24 for more details.

Until next month, stay safe.

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

51
The number of nations that founded the United Nations in 1945 in an attempt to establish world peace

24,000
The number of Scandinavians who made Iceland their home during its Viking settlement

1,177
The number of fatalities on board the USS *Arizona* during the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor

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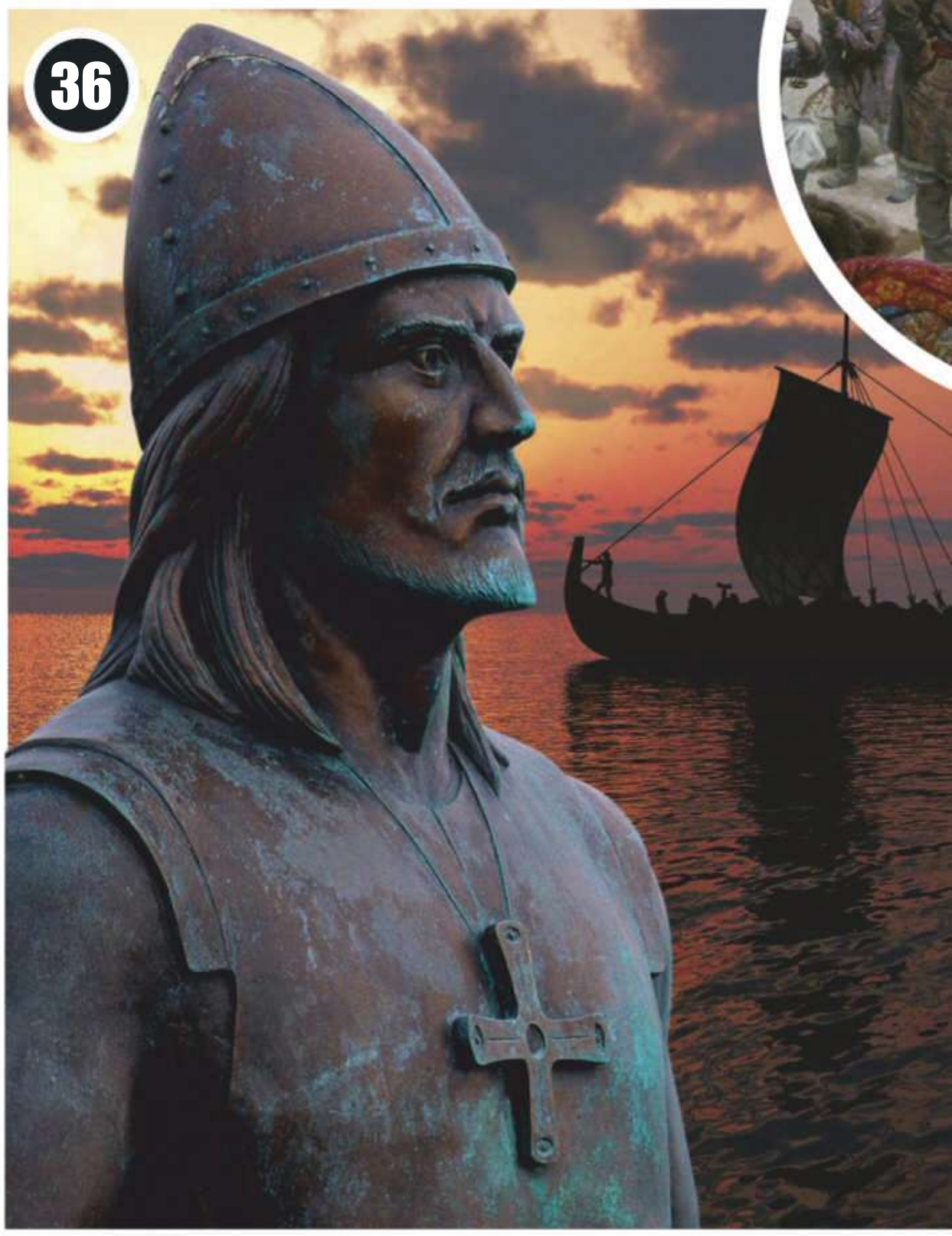

▲ Leif Erikson is thought to be the first European to have reached continental North America

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26

SNAPSHOTS

1917 FIREWOMEN'S LIFT

These female firefighters are practising an evacuation at a workhouse while elderly inhabitants look on. During World War I, British women took on roles that had been left vacant by men who had gone off to fight – in factories and shipyards, traditionally seen as male-dominated workplaces, but also emergency services. By World War II, the recruitment of women into the fire service had grown significantly and, by 1943, more than 90,000 women were enrolled into the National Fire Service.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

c1941

RUBBLE AND RUIN

A woman attempts to salvage some board games from the rubble of her bombed-out home. Britain suffered many bombing raids during World War II, with 57 consecutive nights – and often in daytime – of raids in London during the Blitz of 1940–41 alone, when thousands of people lost their homes and businesses. More than 60,000 British civilians were killed during the whole of World War II, with more than half of these deaths occurring during the Blitz.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

1963
LOOK TO THE SKY

Pupils from a school in Illinois demonstrate how to observe a solar eclipse safely. During a previous eclipse, there had been multiple reports in the US of permanent eye damage. With the help of the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness, these schoolchildren created their own 'sunscopes' – transforming cardboard boxes into pinhole cameras that indirectly project an image of the sun that is safe to look at.

GETTY IMAGES

72 Boxes White
MEDIUM SIZE PROFESSIONAL
KLEENEX 200's
TISSUES
Stock No. 5103*
SNOBOX

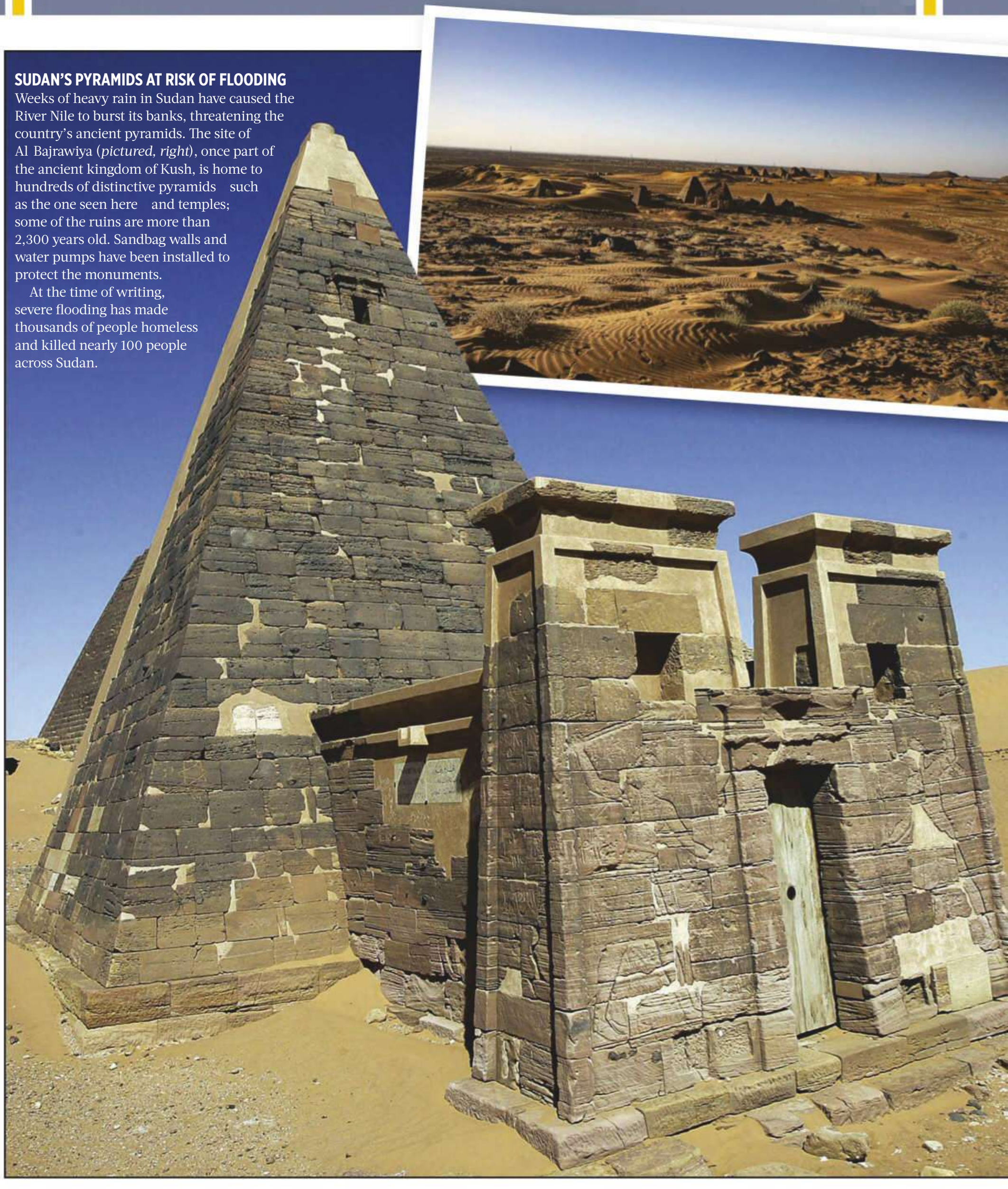
THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH....

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

SUDAN'S PYRAMIDS AT RISK OF FLOODING

Weeks of heavy rain in Sudan have caused the River Nile to burst its banks, threatening the country's ancient pyramids. The site of Al Bajrawiya (*pictured, right*), once part of the ancient kingdom of Kush, is home to hundreds of distinctive pyramids such as the one seen here and temples; some of the ruins are more than 2,300 years old. Sandbag walls and water pumps have been installed to protect the monuments.

At the time of writing, severe flooding has made thousands of people homeless and killed nearly 100 people across Sudan.



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BLUE PLAQUE FOR WWII SPY

Wartime spy Noor Inayat Khan has become the first woman of South Asian descent to be awarded a blue plaque by English Heritage. The plaque recognises Khan's efforts as a Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent in Nazi occupied Paris, before her capture and execution by the Gestapo in 1944. Khan was one of only three women to receive the George Cross for bravery during World War II. First nominated 14 years ago, English Heritage have commemorated her with a plaque (*right*) at the Bloomsbury home where she once lived.

TREASURED TOILETS GIVEN LISTED STATUS

Two rare examples of early female public toilets in Britain have been granted Grade II listed status: Bank Hill toilet in Berwick upon Tweed (*pictured left*), which opened in 1899, and Seaburn's seafront loos, which opened in around 1904. Public toilets began to be introduced in the late 19th century, but nearly all of them were for men. Women, it was believed, were too modest to answer the call of nature away from home, a belief some theorise was a ploy to keep women's movements to a minimum the so called 'urinary leash'.

BRONZE AGE BRITONS KEPT PARTS OF THEIR RELATIVES AS MEMENTOS

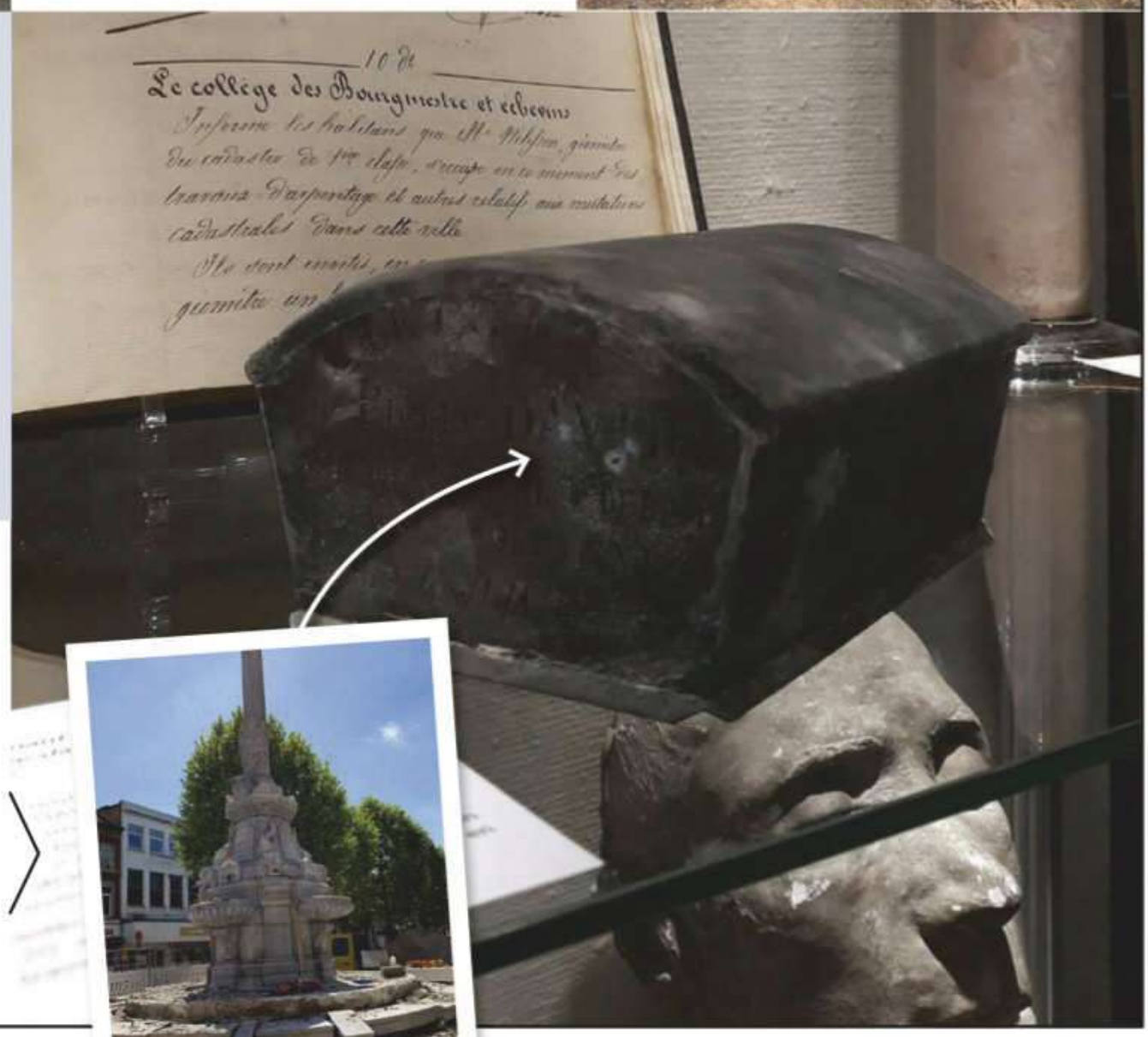
Bronze Age Britons liked to keep parts of their ancestors as a way of remembering them, archaeologists have discovered. New research by the University of Bristol on remains from across Britain has revealed that Bronze Age people were often buried with bits of bones from those who had died decades earlier (*as seen below*). Some of the remains had even been made into tools, instruments and ornaments. An example discovered near Stonehenge revealed a man buried with a whistle carved from a human thigh bone.

1,400

The approximate age, in years, of a Christian chalice found at Vindolanda Roman Fort in Northumberland. It's believed to be the oldest of its kind ever found in Britain.

ENCASED HEART OF BELGIAN MAYOR FOUND INSIDE CITY FOUNTAIN

An urban legend in the Belgian city of Verviers has finally been proven true after the heart of the city's first mayor was discovered in an ornate fountain. Pierre David served as mayor between 1800 and 1808 at a time when Belgium was being ruled by France and again from 1830, the year the country achieved independence, until his death in 1839. The fountain (*inset*) was built in 1883 with David's heart entombed inside. During recent renovations, the heart was found encased in alcohol in a zinc casket (*right*).



TOP LEFT: **Change Alley, once home to London's early coffee houses, is said to be haunted**

TOP RIGHT **The Royal College of Surgeons, given an extra spooky glow by the gaslights**

MAIN: **Richard Jones tells the tale of the cursed cobblestone at Frederick's Place**

LAURA PRIETO X2, ALAMY X2

Haunted London tour guide

Richard Jones

HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO GIVING GHOST TOURS IN LONDON?

As a child, I was an avid reader of ghost stories so I have always had an interest in them. I moved to London from Stoke on Trent in the late 1970s and ended up working as a postman in the city. I became fascinated by all the history to be found there, particularly the gruesome, sinister and ghostly history. For my own entertainment, I began collecting stories about these aspects of the city's past and started telling them to the other postmen while we were sorting the letters. The reactions were nearly always positive, so in 1982 I decided to offer a ghost walk to the public

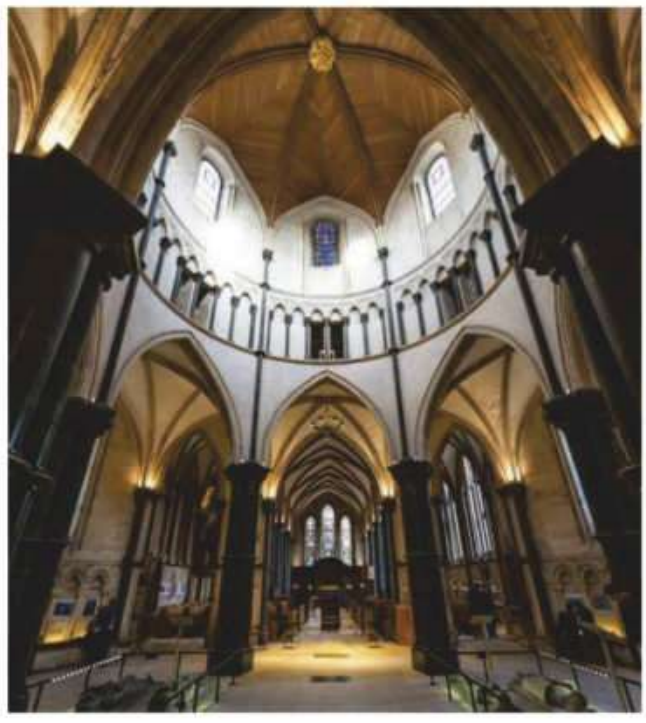
18 people turned up for my first tour, and from then on I was a ghost walk guide.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT LONDON'S HISTORY THAT ATTRACTS YOU?

The history of London is just so rich and varied; it covers so much. There's the sinister and the tragic history, but there's also the funny and bizarre history. I like to think of London's history as an ever running soap opera, the storylines of which have evolved over 2,000 years.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR TOURS?

When I started out, I spent many hours in the wonderful Guildhall Library studying old books and pamphlets, but I have since built up my own extensive library at home on folklore, history and ghostly tales. For the last six years, I have been using the British Newspaper Archive resource offered by the British Library. I love ploughing through the pages of newspapers from the 18th and 19th centuries and reading the first hand accounts of ghost stories that they contain. Preparing for the tours entails walking potential routes and fitting them together to make a walk that is both atmospheric and entertaining. Indeed, I believe that the route is just as important as the stories you are telling. Leading people through narrow alleyways to reach the location of a haunting helps prep them for the story and adds an air of mystery, which puts them in just the right mood by the time they get to hear the story.



"I like to think of London's history as an ever-running soap opera, with storylines evolving over 2,000 years"

WHERE ARE YOUR FAVOURITE LOCATIONS TO TAKE PEOPLE?

I love to take people to the Inns of Court (where the barristers are based), especially at night when the Temple Church (*above*) and Lincoln's Inn are lit by the dull glow of gaslight. It really is atmospheric and, from a ghost walk perspective, very eerie. I also like introducing people to the area around Smithfield, where you have the likes of the church of St Bartholomew the Great, the city's oldest parish church, and The Charterhouse, the site of a wonderfully preserved Tudor manor house with a 14th century plague pit in the square outside. Finally, I get great reactions when I lead them into the old alleys around Cornhill that have changed little since Charles Dickens' day. I always hear people say to each other that it's just like being on a film set.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVOURITE STORIES THAT YOU TELL?

There are so many to choose from! One of my favourites, though, is the Cripplegate Ghost. It is the story of a lady who died and was buried in the Church of St Giles Cripplegate. Her husband insisted that she be buried in her wedding dress and with her wedding ring placed upon her finger. One of the church officers tried to steal the ring in the dead of night, but finding it wedged tightly on her finger tried to cut it off, only to find that the woman was suffering from narcolepsy and had 'come back to life'. It is a fantastic story because you can build the tension and the drama and really use the art of storytelling as the tale progresses.

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANYTHING SPOOKY WHILE ON A TOUR?

Personally, I have never seen anything. But some people on the tours claim they have, and I often get sent photographs taken on the walk that show seemingly inexplicable things. At one location, some people have said they've seen a girl's face in a window, when the property is closed. Other people have captured columns of mist rising from some of the graves in the churchyards. One person was allegedly even whispered to "go away" (although it was put in a cruder manner) by a menacing spectral voice!

IS THERE ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF LONDON THAT YOU'D LIKE TO DO A GHOST TOUR?

Most certainly Edinburgh. I love Edinburgh and have done a lot of research into the ghosts to be found there. There is just something so special about that city.

RICHARD JONES has been guiding visitors around London's haunted spots since 1982 and has written many books on the subject. Visit his website: *london-ghost-tour.com*

The *Mayflower* arrives in the New World

Words: Rhiannon Davies

Early on 9 November 1620, as the sun's first rays reflected on the ocean, the passengers and crew of the *Mayflower* those awake at sunrise, at least finally caught a tantalising glimpse of land. "The appearance of it much comforted us, especially seeing so goodly a land, and wooded to the brink of the sea. It caused us to rejoice together, and praise God that had given us once again to see land," reads *Mourt's Relation*, an account of the settlement of Plymouth by the passengers Edward Winslow and William Bradford.

Reaching the New World had been a perilous undertaking. The ship had been at sea for over two months, battling through ferocious storms and its passengers confined to cramped quarters, but their salvation had finally arrived in a jut of land extending out into the Atlantic Ocean in modern day Massachusetts: Cape Cod.

SAINTS AND STRANGERS

Typically, the *Mayflower* passengers can be split into two groups: the 'Saints' (or 'Pilgrims', as they're known today) who were sailing to escape religious persecution; and the 'Strangers', chasing adventure and economic opportunities in new lands. In reality, these distinctions were less clear cut as many Saints would have been proficient in various trades, while a number of Strangers would likely have had their own religious motivations for leaving Europe behind.

Although the *Mayflower* sailed from England, many Pilgrims onboard had lived in the Dutch city of Leiden for the past decade or so. Their strong religious beliefs many of them were Separatists, who did not want to belong to the Church of England, as they saw it as corrupt, and instead wanted to practise their own branch of Protestantism outside the confines of the Church meant they were forced to flee England.

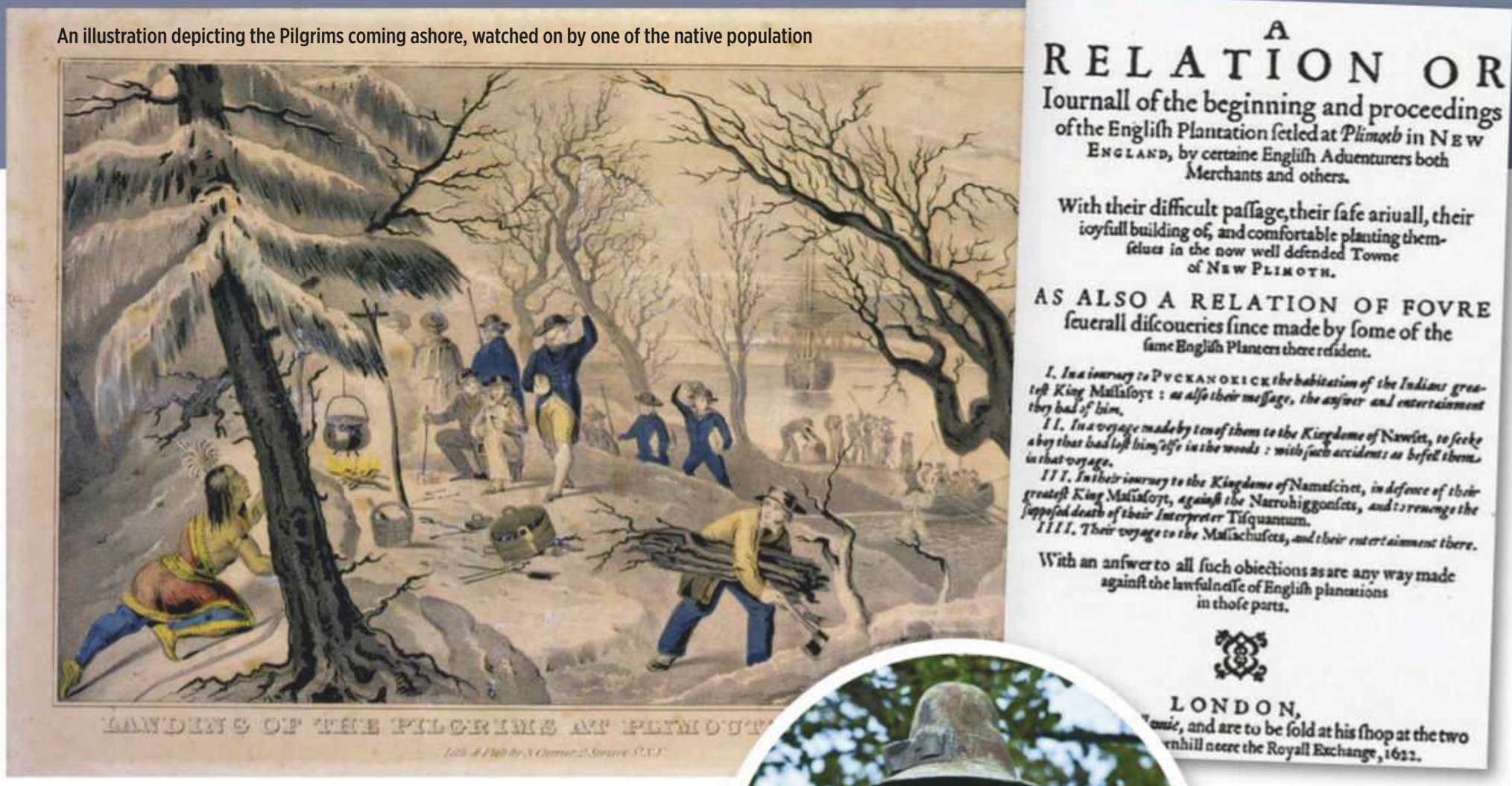
The Pilgrims board the *Mayflower* for their voyage in this print of Bernard Gribble's painting

ALAMY X2, GETTY IMAGES X2

"Ferocious storms in the Atlantic caused crippling seasickness as the ship rolled and pitched from side to side"

The more tolerant Leiden was a haven for the religiously persecuted and the would be Pilgrims thrived in this free thinking place, constructing houses for their community in the 'Engelse poort' (English Gate) and finding employment in the textile industry. William Brewster who later became a religious leader and Elder of the colony owned a printing press, which he used to print dissident pamphlets that were subsequently passed around in England.

Leiden was by no means all they had hoped for, however. Although the English Protestants had been free to practise their religion, worries over a war with the devoutly Catholic Spain abounded; if the Spanish gained control of the area, savage prosecution of Protestants seemed likely to follow. Another concern was that their children seemed to be assimilating into Dutch culture, rather than holding fast to


A
RELATION OR
Iournall of the beginning and proceedings of the English Plantation setled at Plimoth in NEW ENGLAND, by certaine English Aduenturers both Merchants and others.
With their difficult passage, their safe ariuall, their ioyfull building of, and comfortable planting themselues in the now well defended Towne of NEW PLIMOTH.
AS ALSO A RELATION OF FOVRE seuerall discoueries since made by some of the same English Planters there resident.
I. In a iourney to PVCKANOKICK the habitation of the Indians greatest King Massasoyt: as also their message, the answer and entertainment they had of him.
II. In a voyage made by ten of them to the Kingdome of Nawset, to seeke a boy that had lost himselfe in the woods: with such accidents as befell them in that voyage.
III. In their iourney to the Kingdome of Namaschet, in defence of their greatest King Massasoyt, against the Narrohiggonsets, and to revenge the supposed death of their Interpreter Tisquantum.
IIII. Their voyage to the Massachusets, and their entertainment there.
With an answer to all such obiections as are any way made against the lawfulnesse of English plantations in those parts.
LONDON,
and are to be sold at his shop at the two
nhill neere the Royall Exchange, 1622.

An illustration depicting the Pilgrims coming ashore, watched on by one of the native population

their religious ideals. Therefore, in 1617 many decided to leave the Netherlands – as they had left England – and travel to the New World.

TERRIBLE CONDITIONS

There had already been English colonies formed in the Americas – such as Jamestown in 1607 – so the Pilgrims knew it could be done, but their journey proved far more difficult than expected. There were supposed to be two ships, the *Mayflower* and the smaller *Speedwell*, until two aborted attempts proved that the latter was "leaky as a sieve", according to one of the passengers, and deemed unfit for the voyage. Some passengers dropped out, having already spent weeks at sea, while others crammed on to the *Mayflower*, bringing the total number onboard to 102.

Both Pilgrims and Strangers faced terrible conditions on the journey, which got underway on 16 September 1620. With the ship carrying more passengers than planned – and the 30-plus crew – men, women and children lived in extremely close proximity in tiny cabins with paper-thin walls, making resting a tricky prospect. Below decks was worse still, as anyone taller than five feet couldn't stand up fully. To add to the cramped conditions, the ship was transporting far more than just people: stacks of food supplies, tools, gunpowder and cannons and everything needed in the New World, as well as dogs, cats, sheep, goats and poultry.

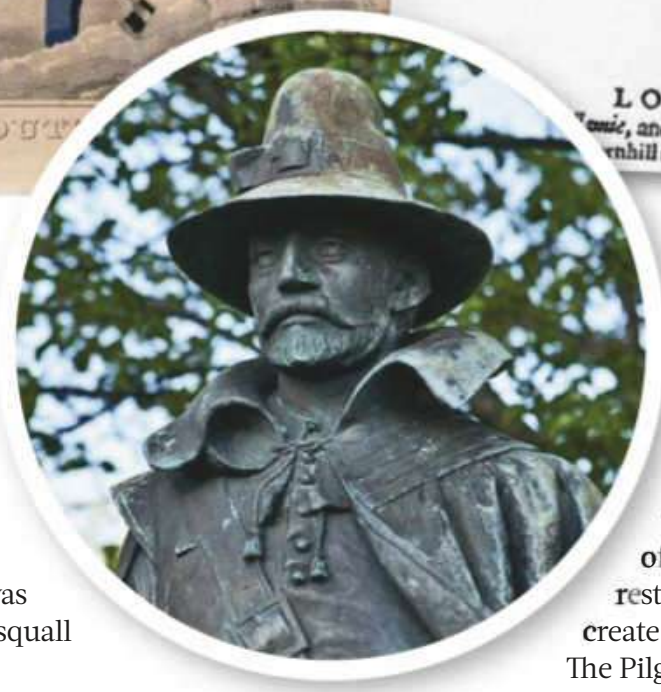
Overcrowding would be the least of their issues, it turned out. Ferocious storms in the Atlantic caused crippling seasickness as the ship rolled, swayed and constantly pitched from side to side. The design of the *Mayflower* was not well-suited to such winds. The discomfort was so severe that many struggled even to get to their feet; one passenger was swept overboard, although was saved. A particularly violent squall damaged the *Mayflower*'s wooden frame, meaning the ship's carpenter had to use tools meant for building settlements to lash together a fractured beam.

NEW WORLD PROBLEMS

After 66 days at sea (the crossing could be done in half the time), the *Mayflower* limped towards the coast of the New World. Yet they were in the wrong place. Cape Cod had not been their destination of choice. When arranging the voyage, the Virginia Company – a trading company chartered by King James VI and I to establish settlements on North America's east coast – had given them permission to create a 'plantation' in an area roughly between Chesapeake Bay (bordered by modern-day Virginia and Maryland) and the mouth of the Hudson River (now in the state of New York).

Instead, the *Mayflower* arrived north of the Hudson and attempts to move south were thwarted by treacherous shoals and ferocious waters that nearly destroyed the ship. Rather than try again, the group opted to stay at Cape Cod and explore the area; they dropped anchor in what's now Provincetown Harbour. But that left a couple of major problems.

As they were outside the area decreed by the Virginia Company, the legality of their enterprise had become murky. Tensions onboard began to rise, with a number of Strangers wishing to take advantage of the situation and leave the rest of the colonists behind to create a settlement by themselves.



ABOVE: **William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth colony, is honoured with a statue in Massachusetts**

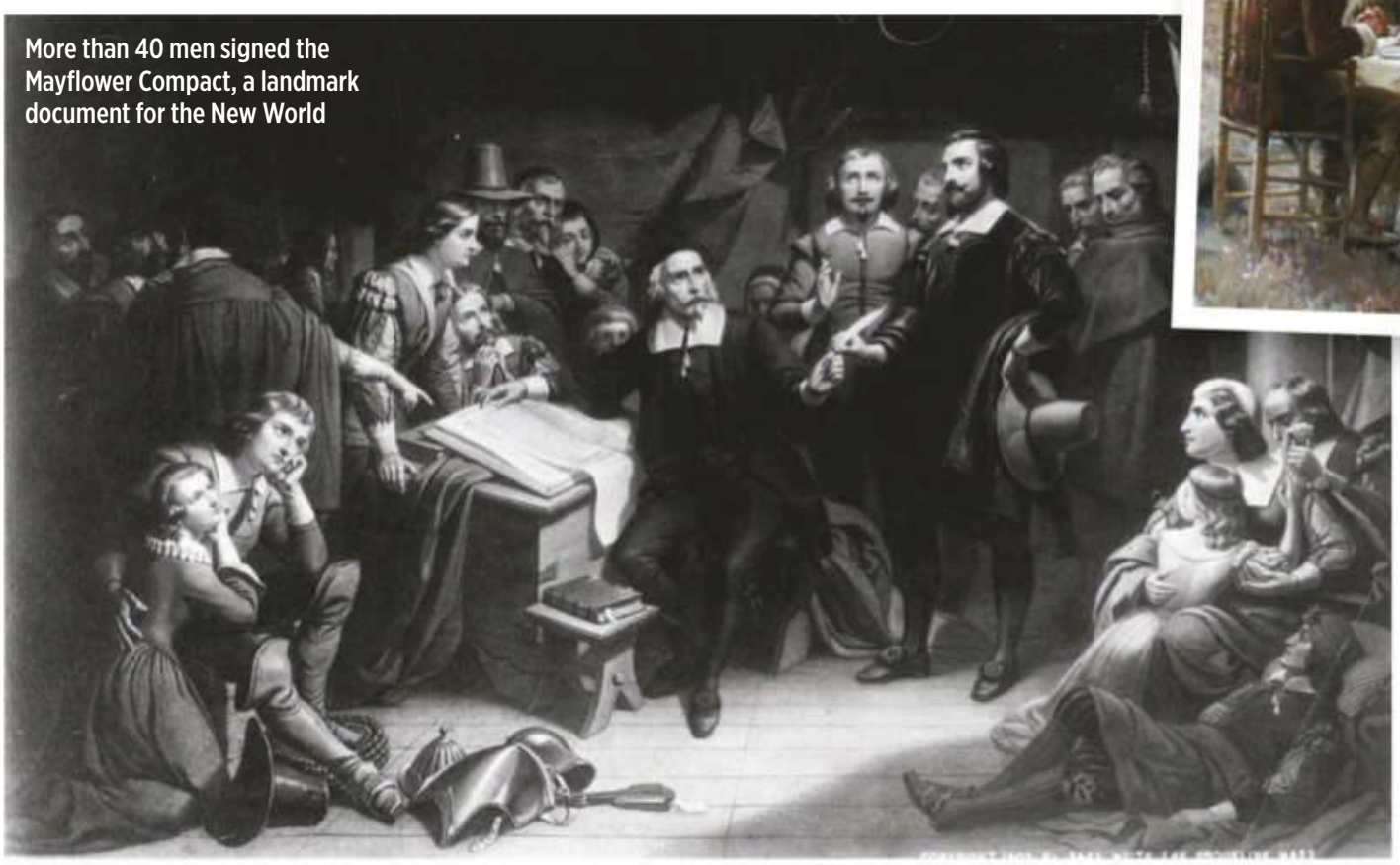
TOP RIGHT: **A 1622 publication of Mourt's Relation, an account of the *Mayflower* voyage and settlements**

The Pilgrims were vehemently against this, and their leaders, including William Bradford and William Brewster, came up with a plan to prevent a splinter group from forming and following through with their threats. According to the account in *Mourt's Relation*, the Pilgrims believed "there should be an association and agreement that we should combine together in one body, and to submit to such government and governors as we should by common consent agree to make and choose". Pilgrim leaders made good on this and, before leaving the ship, penned the Mayflower Compact.

While just under 200 words long, the document contained ideals of great importance. It proclaimed that all who signed would "combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation", meaning the colonists were banding together to act as a law-making body. They agreed to "enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices ... as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience". Almost all the adult males signed the Compact

THIS MONTH... 1620

ANNIVERSARIES THAT HAVE MADE HISTORY



More than 40 men signed the Mayflower Compact, a landmark document for the New World

A romantic interpretation of the first Thanksgiving, a celebration of a successful harvest

on 11 November, making it the first written framework of government in what would be the United States.

Although something of a stopgap the Compact had not solved the legal issues surrounding the settling of land outside of the charter given by the Virginia Company this was a historic moment. Putting into practice the democratic principles of common consent and self government, it has been seen as a crucial step towards democratic government in the Americas.

ON THE EDGE OF EVERYTHING

But while all onboard the *Mayflower* busied themselves with the Compact and initial explorations, their arrival had not gone unnoticed. A small group of Native Americans watched this strange vessel as it sat just off the coast, before retreating. The region was already home to a number of indigenous peoples, including the Wampanoag people, who had lived and worked on the land for thousands of years.

Some of the colonists attempted to go after them, but lost their way and became stranded in dense thickets. Changing course, they stumbled across a patch of land that looked different from the rest: the ground had been cleared, with patches for growing corn, and there was even a collection of houses. They were abandoned, though, and no corn grew on the stalks. They had found the Wampanoag village of Patuxet, which had been deserted after disease ravaged its people – a disease known as the 'Great Dying', brought by European colonists to America in previous years.

Following further exploration and deliberation, the colonists decided that this abandoned village already a potent sign of how European colonisation would affect the indigenous populations would be the site of their new colony, named Plymouth in homage to the English port they had left.

> "If not for the kindness and intervention of the Native Americans, Plymouth would not have endured"

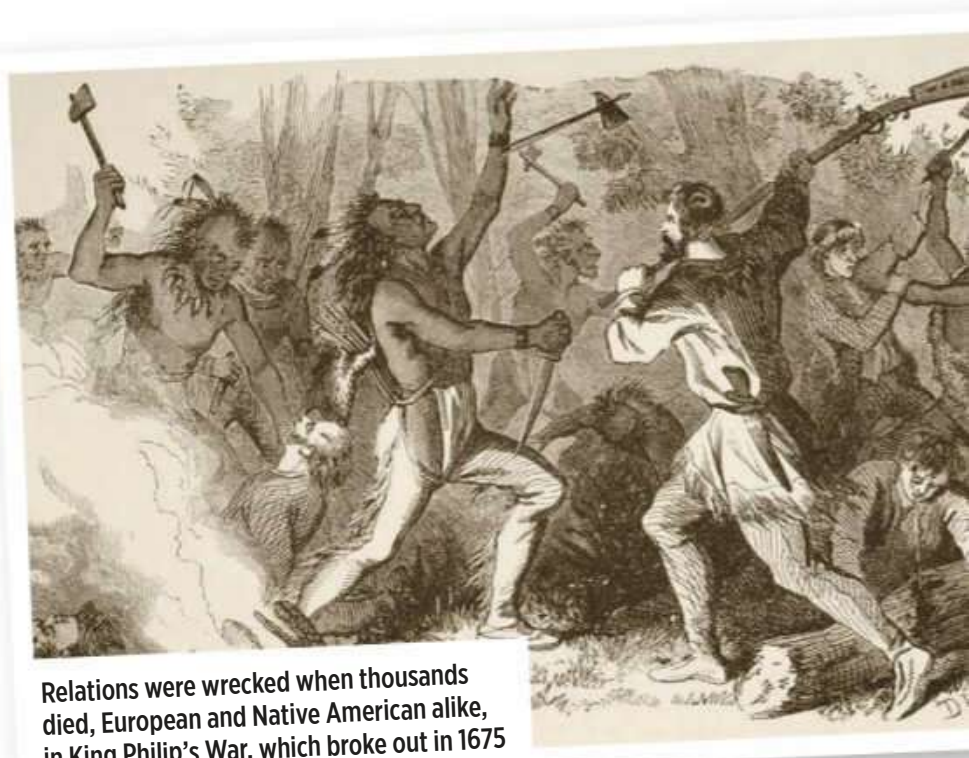
They sailed the *Mayflower* from the Cape and arrived at what would be known as Plymouth Bay on 26 December. Unloading the tools they brought, the colonists set about constructing the first buildings, ready to bring their ideal settlement into being.

But the Pilgrim paradise quickly became a form of hell. The first winter was desperately brutal, with temperatures regularly plummeting below zero and the colonists, lacking sufficient food supplies, suffering from malnutrition. Many elected to stay onboard the *Mayflower*, but they were no safer on the ship as it became a floating breeding ground for contagious disease. The sick trod its decks waiting for death. Sometimes, there were fewer than ten people healthy enough to care for the rest of the settlers.

Less than half of the passengers and *Mayflower* crew survived that first deadly winter. The future of Plymouth looked bleak as spring eventually dawned, but with the heat of a new year's sun also came the outstretched hand of friendship. In March 1621, an Abenaki named Samoset, who spoke English, ventured into the colony and spoke to the remaining colonists.

The initial meeting was a success, and Samoset later introduced them to another English speaker, Tisquantum, sometimes known as Squanto. By showing the settlers how to plant crops such as corn and the best places nearby to hunt beaver and fish, he showed the colonists kindnesses that would ultimately save them from starvation. Tisquantum also brokered a meeting between the colonists and Wampanoag chief Massasoit. Relations continued to progress between the two groups, with Massasoit agreeing to a peace treaty (he hoped the gun-wielding arrivals could defend his people against local rivals).

If not for the intervention of the Native Americans, Plymouth would not have endured. With their help, the



Relations were wrecked when thousands died, European and Native American alike, in King Philip's War, which broke out in 1675

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settlers were able to farm prodigiously in 1621 and, in the autumn, they harvested a bountiful crop. They celebrated by inviting the indigenous peoples to join them for a feast, an event now remembered as the first Thanksgiving.

With Plymouth starting to flourish, the surviving colonists of the *Mayflower* soon found themselves joined by other Europeans looking to build something in the New World. Waves of Puritans emigrated to the New England in the 1630s; the Massachusetts Bay Colony had increased to a population of more than 20,000 by the mid-1640s.

ON A PRAYER

The attitudes of the new arrivals towards the Native Americans were broadly similar to many European colonists: it was their duty to 'civilise' the 'savage' indigenous population. A major part of this involved conversion to Christianity. So-called 'praying towns' began to spring up, intended for Native Americans who embraced the new religion. Here, they would engage in prayer and wear their hair and clothes in the European style. By 1674, there are thought to have been 14 such towns, with around 4,000 'praying Indians' in the region.

The peace between European settler and Native American, which had been so carefully cultivated between the original *Mayflower* Pilgrims and Wampanoag people, eventually disintegrated. During the King Philip's War, a bloody 14-month confrontation, thousands of Native Americans – and Europeans – were slaughtered.

To this day, the legacy of the Plymouth colony has survived in the face of what was to come regarding Native American populations, and is still enshrined as one of the cornerstones of US history. The actions of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims are seen by many to embody principles that form the bedrock of American society: liberty, freedom and tolerance – even if, in reality, the Pilgrims, and those who followed, fell short of such lofty ideals.

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

A LOOK BACK AT FOUR OTHER EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN NOVEMBER THROUGHOUT HISTORY

3 November 1957

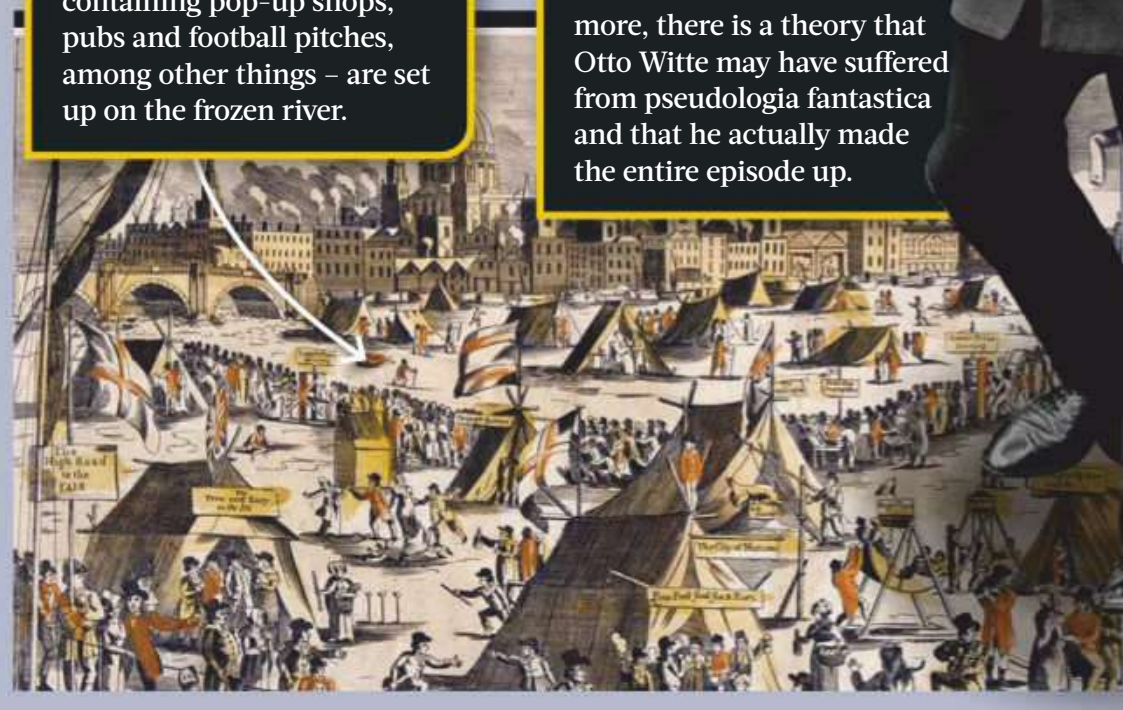
PAWS FOR THOUGHT

The Soviets successfully send a dog named Laika into orbit, signalling their latest victory in the Space Race against the US. The capsule, however, isn't designed to return to Earth, and Laika dies a few hours after lift-off. When the Soviets send two more dogs into space, in 1960, they make sure the pooches come safely back to Earth.

14 November 1889

GALLIVANTING AROUND THE GLOBE

American reporter Nellie Bly sets sail from New York to put the premise of Jules Verne's 1873 novel, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, to the test. Opting for a diverse range of travel methods, including Chinese junks and camels, Bly completes her trip in a record 72 days, six hours, 11 minutes and 14 seconds.



24 November 1434

WINTER WONDERLAND

London's River Thames freezes so hard that merchandise usually brought by river has to be unladen and transported to the city by land. This becomes quite common throughout the 'Little Ice Age' and Frost Fairs – containing pop-up shops, pubs and football pitches, among other things – are set up on the frozen river.

28 November 1912

A RIGHT ROYAL MESS... OR WAS IT?

After Albania declares itself independent, Turkish prince Halim Eddine is nominated as the country's 'protector'. Eddine is crowned King Otto I. On day five of his reign, Albania's prime minister receives a telegram from the real Halim Eddine – it turns out 'Otto I' is actually Otto Witte (*right*), a German circus performer posing as the prince.

To confuse matters even more, there is a theory that Otto Witte may have suffered from pseudologia fantastica and that he actually made the entire episode up.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Lessons from history

TO MARK THE NEW ONLINE EXHIBITION 150 VOICES, MEHZEBIN ADAM, CURATOR OF THE BRITISH RED CROSS MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES, DISCUSSES HOW THE CHARITY'S HISTORY IS RELEVANT TODAY

A simple act of kindness can go a long way. One hundred and fifty years on from the establishment of the Red Cross, this sentiment rings truer than ever.

The charity was born when, shocked by the suffering of wounded soldiers in the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in 1859, Swiss humanitarian Henry Dunant urged all nations to create volunteer groups who could provide impartial relief to the sick and wounded.

Following the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the British Red Cross was formed on the 4th of August to provide relief to the sick and wounded soldiers on both sides of the war. The society was established based upon rules of the Geneva Convention and joined the global Red Cross movement to work towards the shared goal of helping people in need, no matter who or where they are.

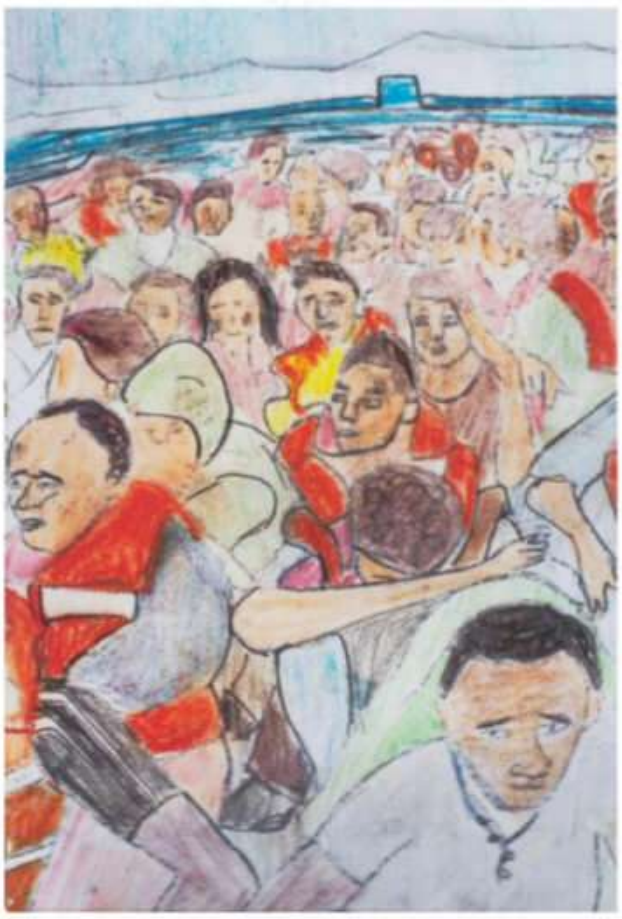
TIMELESS TRUTHS

While 2020 has been a year of great change for many reasons, one thing is for certain – the importance of coming together in the face of adversity, despite our differences, is what makes us human. It seems fitting then, to mark the 150 year legacy of the British Red Cross with a celebration of human kindness.

As part of the 150 Voices exhibition, 150 volunteers selected 150 objects from the British Red Cross Museum and Archives. Each item is an emblem of how the charity connects human goodness with human crisis, a powerful reminder that when we come together the impossible can be achieved.

At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has meant that many museums have been inaccessible, this new online exhibition allows people to virtually explore the British Red Cross Museum and Archives and learn about the charity's 150 years of history.

^ Red Cross ambulance drivers in France, WWI



^ Volunteer Mahdi Ali chose a contemporary artwork by a young refugee in the UK. "I was blown away by the colourful imagery used within an otherwise sombre drawing of an unforgettable day in this refugee's life,' he said. "That artist has clearly illustrated her terrifying experience of fleeing a place she once called 'home.'"

^ Daniella Dray, another volunteer, chose the illustrated triangular bandage from the 1940s. "I think it was a very good idea to print the instructions on the bandage itself! I was astounded that such a simple bandage could be used in so many different ways.'"

LEAVE YOUR OWN LEGACY

The work carried out by the British Red Cross is as essential today as it was in Doris' time. It's thanks to the generosity of the charity's supporters that it can always be ready to help those in crisis, whether they're on the other side of the world or on your own street. By leaving a gift in your will, you can leave your own legacy and ensure the British Red Cross can continue to support vulnerable people for many years to come.

150 years the power of kindness | BritishRedCross

Visit the 150 Voices online exhibition for yourself now at redcross.org.uk/150voices

The United Nations

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

The first informal meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva in 1920. It would be disbanded due to the one thing it tried to prevent: world war

Chancellor Adolf Hitler pulls Germany from the League of Nations in October 1933

WHAT IS THE UNITED NATIONS?

The United Nations (UN) is an international diplomatic and political organisation with a global mission and – as of 2020 – 193 member states. It was originally created to prevent future wars, but its scope has widened so that, today, it focuses on peacekeeping missions, humanitarian aid and seeking solutions to problems affecting the world, such as hunger and climate change. The main objectives of the UN are to maintain peace and security, protect human rights, encourage international cooperation, respond to humanitarian emergencies, promote sustainable development and uphold international law.

WHY WAS THE UN FORMED?

Formed in 1945, in the last year of World War II, its purpose was to prevent another catastrophic global conflict from happening again, and keep international peace. It was based on an earlier set of agreements and charters by the Allied countries, but only became an official organisation after hostilities had ended.

WHAT EARLIER ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO ENSURE WORLD PEACE?

In 1899, the Hague in the Netherlands hosted an International Peace Conference attended by representatives from 26 leading nations – including the UK, Germany and the US – at the suggestion of Count Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyov, foreign minister to Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. The conference established the Permanent Court of Arbitration, with the aim of offering legal solutions for disputes between states, a role it still performs to this day. The conference did not achieve its main aim of limiting the expansion of armed forces – Nicholas II wanted to avoid an arms race with Germany – but it did prohibit the use of asphyxiating gases and expanding bullets.

The Hague Conventions of 1899 and another in 1907 were later followed by the League of Nations, created in 1920 in the wake of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I. Spearheaded by US President Woodrow Wilson, it was hoped the League would resolve conflicts between nations without bloodshed. The US ultimately did not join, though, as the Treaty of Versailles was not ratified by the Senate.

> "The purpose of the UN was to prevent another catastrophic global conflict from happening again, and keep peace"

The League of Nations proved more popular elsewhere, however, as 42 countries joined after it came into effect in January 1920. Russia, however, refused to recognise the League's authority, while Hitler pulled Germany – a member since 1926 – from the League in 1933 after a dispute over disarmament. Japan, Italy and Spain also withdrew during the 1930s. The League failed to prevent World War II, and was formally disbanded on 19 April 1946, with its powers and functions transferred to the then fledgling United Nations.

WHAT WERE THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS FORMING THE UN?

By June 1941, the exiled governments of nine Nazi-occupied countries had made their home in London, the base of the Allied war effort. On 12 June, representatives from these nine governments – Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia, and of General de Gaulle of France – met with representatives from the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa at St James's Palace. Here, ▶

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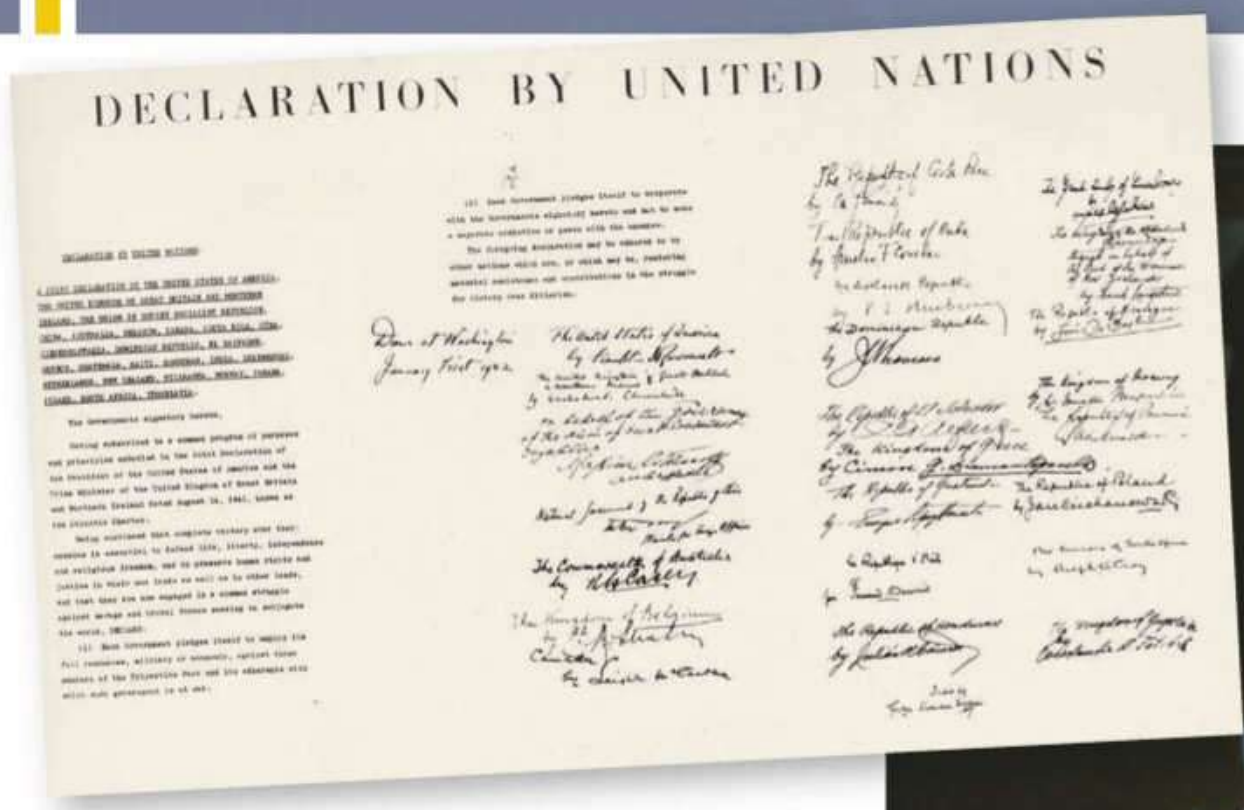
IN A NUTSHELL

YOUR BRIEF EXPLAINER TO HISTORY'S HOT TOPICS


DECLARATION BY UNITED NATIONS

ABOVE: **After the first 26 countries signed the Declaration of the United Nations, on New Year's Day 1942, a further 21 signed their pledge to defeating the Axis powers**

RIGHT: **The 'Big Three' at the 1945 Yalta conference: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin**

they all signed a declaration the first joint statement of goals and principles by the Allies of World War II.

With the Declaration of St James's Palace, the Allies made three pledges: to continue with, and assist one another in, the fight against Germany and Italy; that there could be no peace while free people lived under Axis domination; and to ensure enduring peace and cooperation with all free peoples.

Two months later, a joint declaration the Atlantic Charter was issued by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D Roosevelt. Although not a treaty, it was an expression of a mutual desire for peace and gave hope to countries under Nazi occupation. Some four months after this meeting, the US joined World War II.

WHERE DID THE IDEA OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORIGINATE?

Signed on 1 January 1942, the Declaration of the United Nations saw 26 countries, including the 'Big Four' of the UK, the US, the Soviet Union and China, pledge to continue fighting the Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Japan), and prevent nations from making a separate peace.

Roosevelt was a chief supporter of the creation of the United Nations and considered it one of his most important achievements while in office although he would die before the UN officially came into existence. Various meetings took place over the coming years to iron out the plan for a post war charter and what the role of the UN would look like.

HOW WAS ITS STRUCTURE EVENTUALLY DECIDED?

Representatives of the Big Four met from August to October 1944 at Dumbarton Oaks, a mansion in Washington, DC, to discuss the principles of the international organisation that would succeed the League of Nations once the war was over.

An agreement had been reached by 7 October. Proposals including establishing the four principal bodies of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat were sent to the other signatories of the Declaration of the United Nations in 1942. The Security Council would be in charge of preventing future wars and member states would need to place armed forces at its disposal in order to maintain peace and suppress acts of aggression.

WHAT WAS DECIDED AT YALTA IN RELATION TO THE UN?

A further conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Soviet premier Joseph Stalin was held at Yalta, in Crimea, in February 1945. The procedure of voting within the Security Council, which had not been agreed at Dumbarton Oaks, was established. The meeting also secured Stalin's agreement that the Soviet Union would join the United Nations, as well as establishing how World War II could be brought to an end and what a post-war Europe would look like.

> "Member states would need to place armed forces at the disposal of the Security Council to maintain peace"

Later that year, it was decided that the UK, the US, the Soviet Union, China and France – permanent members of the UN's Security Council – could veto any proposal, even if it had the required votes. This decision was resented by smaller countries, but they were threatened with the dismantling of the UN Charter if they did not agree. (For more on the Yalta Conference, visit *historyextra.com/yalta-potsdam-guide*)

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

At the United Nations Conference on International Organisation, held in San Francisco from April to June 1945, the main outlines of the UN Charter were decided. The 46 nations that had, by March 1945, declared war on Germany

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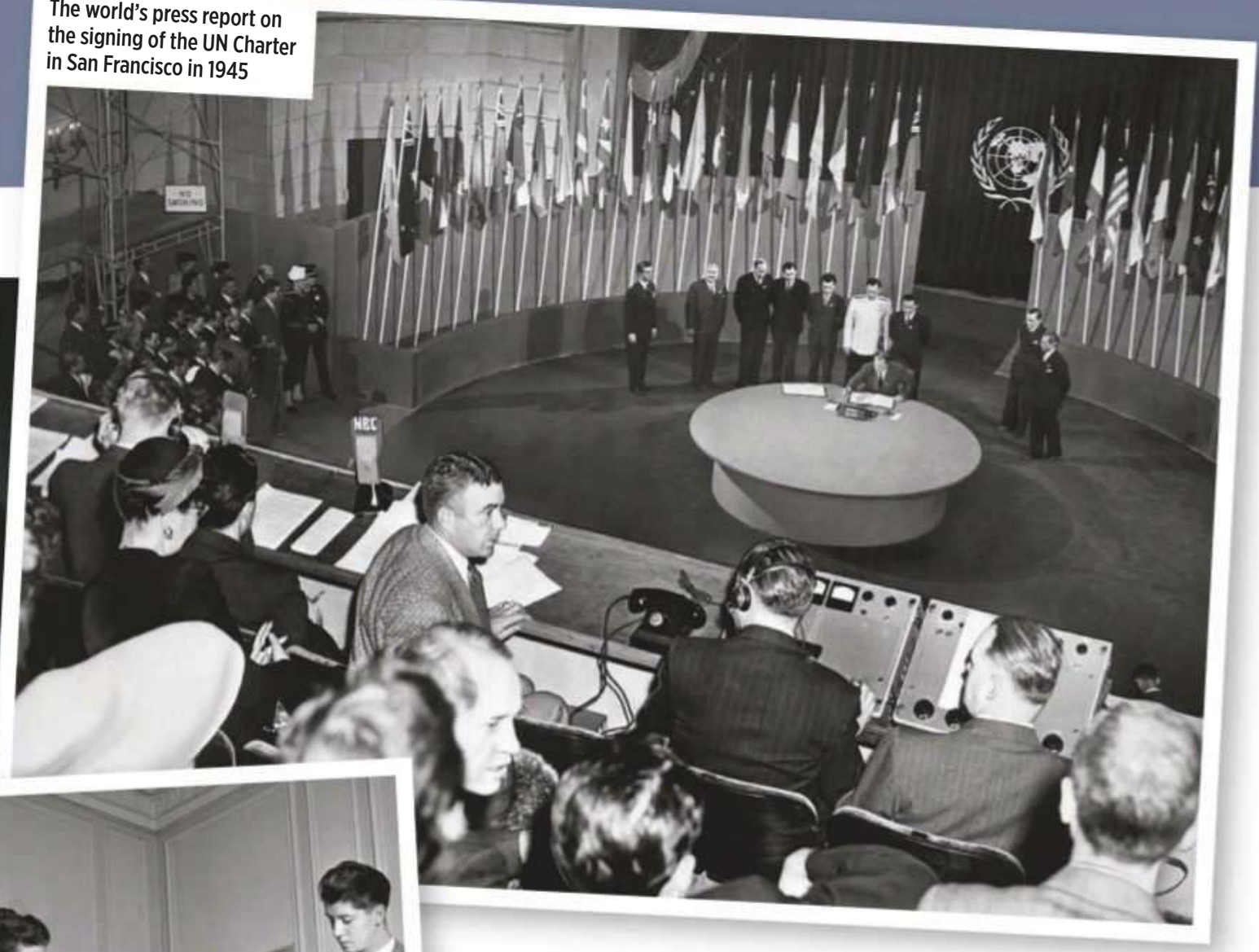

The world's press report on the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945

Staff at the Paris UN office in 1948 unfurl the UN flag; the logo is a world map within two olive branches, as a symbol of world peace

and Japan and agreed to the United Nations Declaration were invited to take part, as were four other states: the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, newly liberated Denmark and Argentina.

The UN Charter was drawn up based on proposals outlined at Dumbarton Oaks. This was no easy task as it needed to be accepted by 50 nations representing more than 80 per cent of the world's population. With thousands of additional staff and the world's press watching, this was one of the largest international gatherings to ever take place. Every part of the Charter had to be agreed on by a two-thirds majority.

WHEN WAS THE CHARTER FINALLY SIGNED?

Following two months of discussion, clashes of opinion and revisions, a vote on the final draft of the Charter was held on 25 June 1945. To mark the momentous occasion, instead of raising hands to vote, each delegate rose and remained standing. The entire room rose to their feet and the UN Charter was adopted with unanimous approval and an ovation.

The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by representatives of 50 countries (Poland was not present, but signed later, becoming the 51st member state). As the first country to resist and fight an Axis power, China was given the honour of signing first, with the Soviet Union, UK and France following. The other countries then signed in alphabetical order; the US, as the host country, was the final signatory.

US President Truman stated that all nations must work together to ensure the Charter is upheld: "If we fail to use it we shall betray all those who have died so that we might meet here in freedom and safety to create it. If we seek to use it selfishly – for the advantage of any one nation or any small group of nations – we shall be equally guilty of that betrayal."

After ratification of the Charter by the governments of China, France, Britain, the Soviet Union, the US and a majority of the other signatory states, the United Nations came into existence on 24 October 1945. It had taken years of planning, but now the world had an organisation in which countries were united in a desire for peace and cooperation.

WHY WASN'T POLAND AT THE SIGNING OF THE CHARTER?

At the time of the San Francisco Conference, Poland had no officially recognised government, so a representative was not present. A space was left blank on the UN Charter, which Poland signed on 15 October once the composition of its government had been confirmed.

HOW HAS THE UNITED NATIONS CHANGED SINCE 1945?

Today, the UN has 193 member states, as well as two non-member observer states: the Holy See (the government of the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican City) and the State of Palestine, both of which can be members of some of the UN's specialised agencies and participate in the General Assembly. Kosovo is not a member state as it is not recognised by all member states, including Russia, as being independent from Serbia and the same applies to Taiwan, which is still claimed by the People's Republic of China.

The UN runs a number of specialised agencies with different aims, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which protects heritage sites across the world.

LISTEN

BBC WORLD SERVICE

The roles and importance of the United Nations is discussed in a ten-episode series on the BBC World Service: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0338l78*

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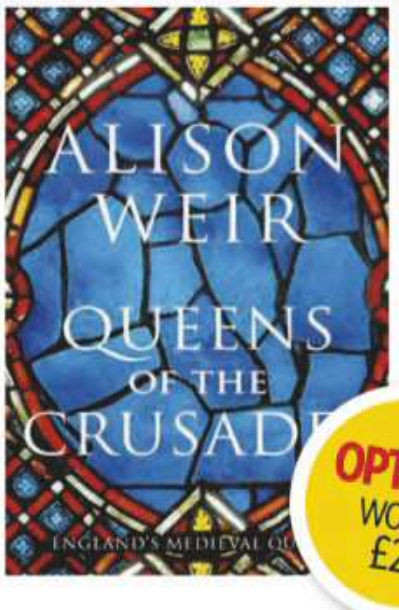

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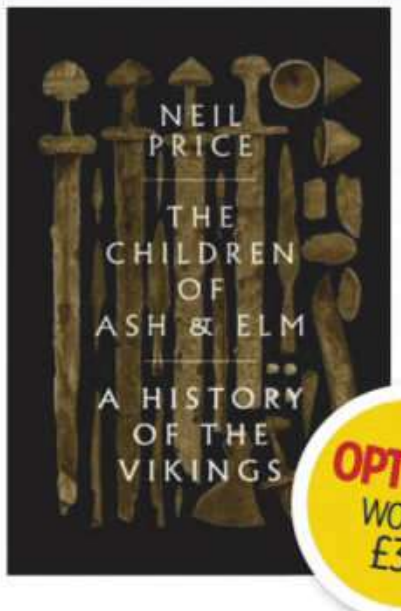
The Plantagenet queens of England played a role in some of the most dramatic events in our history. Through the story of these first five Plantagenet queens, Alison Weir provides an enthralling new perspective on a dramatic period of high romance and sometimes low politics, with determined women at its heart.



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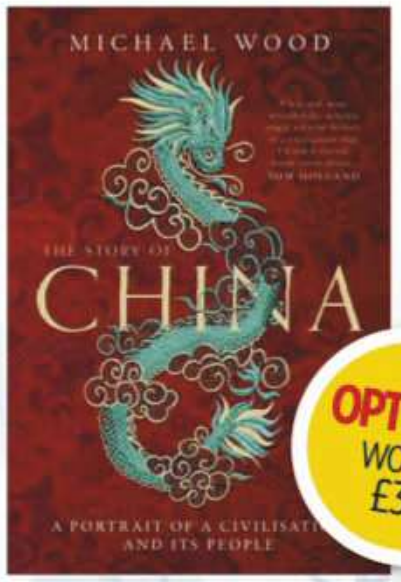
Agent Sonya: Love, Mother, Soldier, Spy

By Ben Macintyre

Far from being a British housewife, 'Mrs Burton' – born Ursula Kuczynski, and codenamed 'Sonya' – was a German Jew, a dedicated communist, a colonel in Russia's Red Army, and a highly-trained spy. Agent Sonya is the exhilarating account of one woman's life; a woman who altered the course of history.



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YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE VIKINGS

Bursting forth from Scandinavia in the late 8th century, the Vikings rapidly made their presence felt across the early medieval world. To some, these often-bearded seafarers were little more than barbarians, bellicose brutes intent only on slaughter and plunder. To others they were recognised as traders, worldly travellers with coveted wares. Sometimes they were settlers, sometimes slavers. Above all, they were explorers, whose exploits took them across the Atlantic, down to Iberia and as far as Constantinople.

Over the next 28 pages we'll explore not only the legacy of the Vikings, but some of the biggest questions surrounding them – many of which are shrouded in mystery. Did they deserve their bloodthirsty reputation, for instance, and what was Norse society like away from the battlefields? What is Valhalla, and why were Viking warriors so keen to get there? What role did the gods play in daily life? Turn the page to set sail into the Viking Age – and be sure to leave the horned helmet behind...

28 A short introduction to the Vikings
Historian Philip Parker gives us a primer on the Vikings and the Viking Age – plus, we examine four 'facts' about the Vikings that are completely wrong

34 Major milestones of the Viking Age
Did you know that Norse explorers settled Iceland in the same decade that Alfred the Great triumphed over the Great Heathen Army at Edington? Get a visual sense of the Viking Age with our timeline

36 Explorers, raiders and traders
Journey with the Vikings on their greatest adventures – from the invasion of Anglo-Saxon England to the settlement of Greenland and the 'discovery' of North America

42 Rulers of the waves
What was a Viking longship, and why was it so important to their success?

44 Warriors and warfare
What made a Viking warband so fearsome? And were berserkers real?

46 How they lived
Explore Viking law, justice, the role of slaves – and a typical home, the longhouse

48 Women and the Viking world
Dr Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir explains why we'd be wrong to think that the Viking world was solely a man's world

52 Gods, myths beliefs and rituals
The Vikings were pagan, polytheistic and had a plethora of ways to worship – insofar as we know

PHILIP PARKER is a historian, a former diplomat and the author of *The Northmen's Fury: A History of the Viking World*. His latest work is *The History of World Trade in Maps*, which will be published by HarperCollins in October.

From hit-and-run raids to full-on invasion, the Vikings made an impact on Europe still felt to this day

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE VIKINGS

Philip Parker answers key questions about the Vikings – from raiding and trading, to their lasting legacy

INTERVIEW BY KEV LOCHUN

Q: Who were the Vikings and where did they come from?

A: The people we know as the Vikings hailed from modern-day Denmark, Norway and Sweden; it was from their Scandinavian homelands in the late eighth century that they stormed onto the European stage with their first forays into raiding and exploration. It was a bloody beginning to an era that would have a profound impact on society, trade and culture across the continent.

But what exactly was a Viking? The term did not actually refer to a distinct social group. Strictly speaking, it was a way of life, referring specifically to the seafaring warriors carrying out the raids on the rest of northwestern Europe. What might have been said at the time was that these warriors had gone 'a-viking', meaning they had gone on a raid. It was only later that the term would be transferred to the entire Norse culture, political evolution, artistic styles, and everybody who lived there, including those who stayed behind and didn't go raiding.

They certainly did not call themselves Vikings, nor did they conceive of themselves as some sort of great wave or movement. Raids began as private enterprises launched by individuals. Only as they achieved greater success and riches did the ventures into Europe become more organised and, eventually, state directed.

Q: When was the Viking Age?

A: The start and end dates are a little fuzzy. The first datable Viking raid was on Lindisfarne off the northeast coast of England in AD 793. That's a useful beginning, launching the Viking Age with a big bang, although, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a raid took place in southwest England probably a few years earlier.

The end of the Viking era is much more difficult to place. Traditionally, people in England like to think of 1066 as the downfall of the Vikings, with the defeat of Harald Hardrada and his Norwegian invasion force at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. But that did not stop all Norse campaigns nor, by any means, destroy their influence across Europe. In fact, there were still old-style Viking raids taking place in small numbers until the middle of the 13th century. I think it's safe to say this was when the Viking Age came to an end.

Q: What prompted the eruption of Viking raids, beginning with Lindisfarne in AD 793?

A: There is no single trigger or single answer. To start, living conditions in Scandinavia were tough and cold, and when something goes wrong in any such society – living close to subsistence ▶

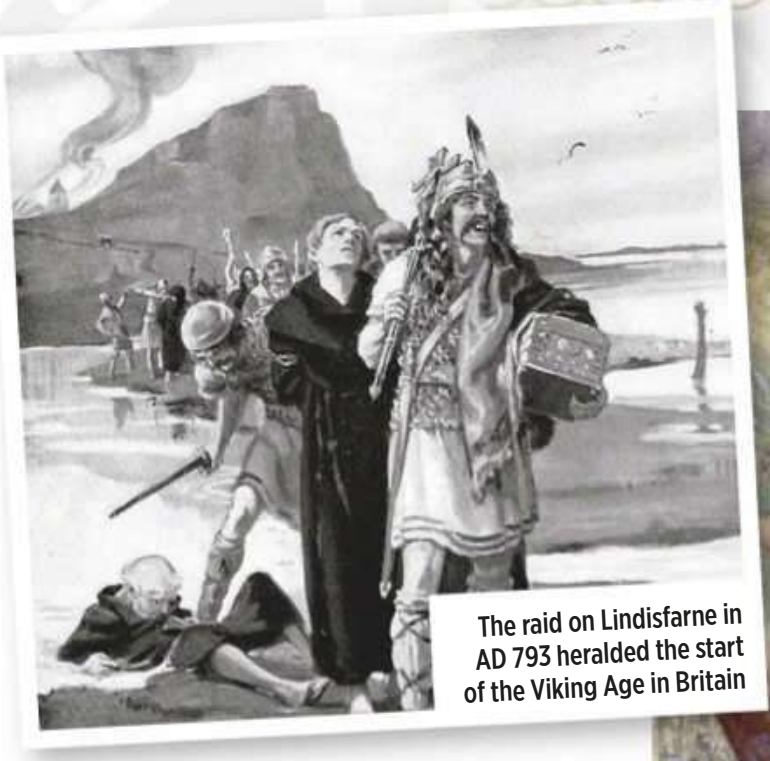
DID YOU KNOW?

VIKINGS GO VIRAL

News of the Lindisfarne raid of AD 793 reached the scholar Alcuin in the Frankish kingdom of Charlemagne. He wrote of his horror at the news, claiming the attackers "trampled on the bodies of saints in the temple of God, like dung in the street."

Lindisfarne holds the dubious honour of being the location of England's first recorded raid by the Vikings

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1



The raid on Lindisfarne in AD 793 heralded the start of the Viking Age in Britain

DID YOU KNOW?

HAVE TO BE IN-SEINE

In AD 845, Vikings laid siege to Paris having sailed more than 100 ships up the Seine. They eventually withdrew after being given a hefty ransom, but further failed attacks on the city took place in the 860s and then again in c885-86.

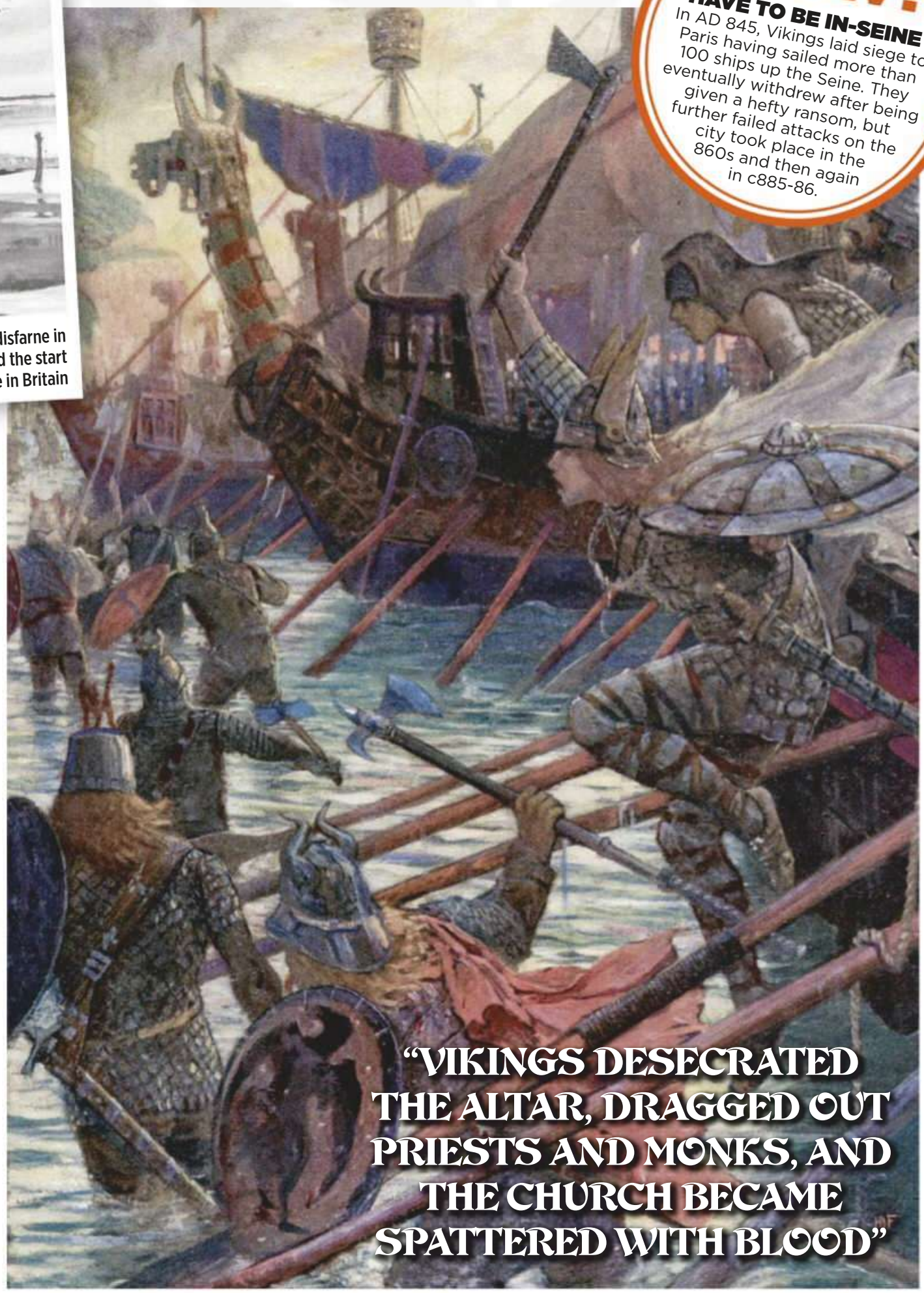
level its people will move on if they are able to do so. Most settlements in Scandinavia, particularly Norway, were around the coastal fringes, indented with the fjords. The inland area would not have been particularly fertile, meaning that an obvious response to any kind of food supply crisis was to take to the sea. There is some evidence of population stress in certain areas, so that may have been one precondition.

Another reason was the fact that in order to launch a series of raids, there had to be something worth attacking. At the time, northwest Europe was beginning to enter a period of relative prosperity. The long recovery from the fall of the Roman Empire, and the gradual emergence of Germanic kingdoms in France and England in particular, had reached the point where a significant level of economic activity was beginning to emerge. Great trading settlements began to appear, such as Quentovic in northern France and Hamwic (now Southampton), filled with transportable goods. They would have made for attractive targets to potential raiders.

Being seafaring folk, technological advances in shipbuilding was another probable cause for the start of the Viking raids across the North Sea. Over the course of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, the Viking peoples developed increasingly effective ships, which instilled confidence in them that they could set sail across open water, trusting in their sophisticated navigation skills, and return home safely.

A fourth, and perhaps clinching, factor, was that northwestern Europe, while enjoying a period of prosperity, would have been ripe for the picking due to political instability. England was balkanised between six or seven main Anglo-Saxon states, while France, although unified by Charlemagne not long into the Viking age, quickly became divided when he died in AD 814.

Put all of this together and you have a people motivated to move, the practical means with which to reach new lands, something to aim for once there, topped by a vulnerable, divided enemy.



"VIKINGS DESECRATED THE ALTAR, DRAGGED OUT PRIESTS AND MONKS, AND THE CHURCH BECAME SPATTERED WITH BLOOD"

The Vikings spread fear wherever their longboats landed, although not in horned helmets like these

Q: They have a reputation as savage, bloodthirsty barbarians, but were the Vikings any more violent than others of their time?

A: The early histories of the Viking raids were written by the (surviving) victims, who clearly had a reason to portray the people attacking them as more than usually brutal. As the Vikings favoured hit-and-run raids on defenceless religious communities, this would have made them appear even more barbaric. This meant that their reputation was born almost at once. Accounts of the raid on Lindisfarne referred to the appalling way in which the Vikings desecrated the altar, dragged out priests and monks, and how the church became spattered with blood.

Whether these details were true or not, they were the kind of things that ▶

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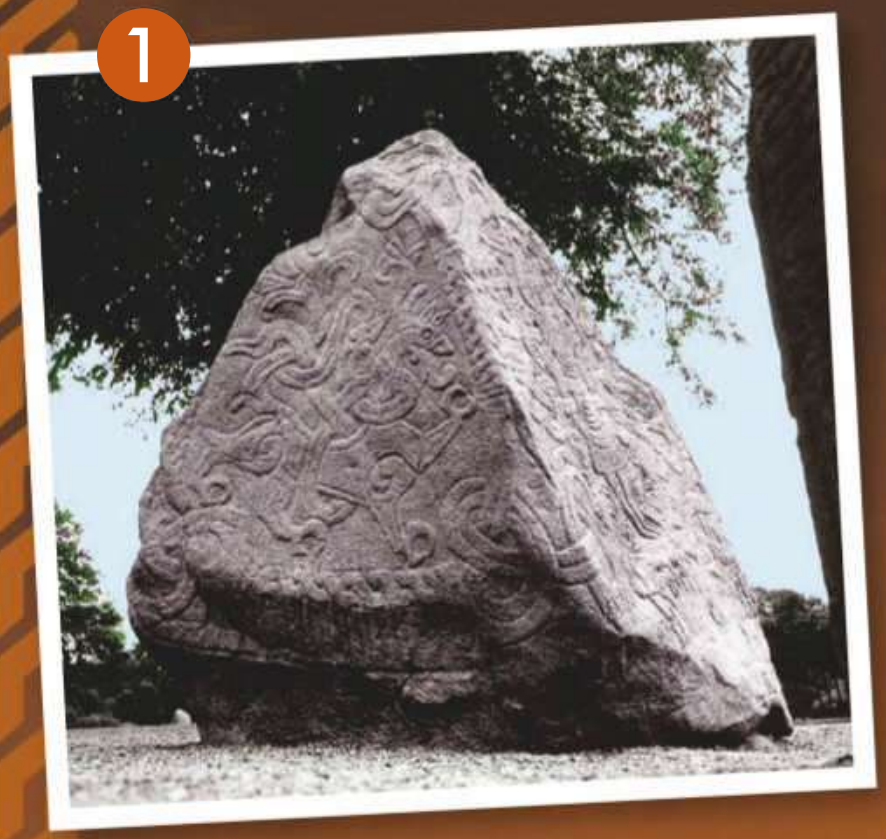
FOUR VIKING 'FACTS' (THAT ARE COMPLETELY WRONG)

1



THEY WERE ONLY RAIDERS AND REIVERS

▶ Despite their wantonly violent reputation, the Vikings were traders, explorers and settlers as well as raiders. As a result of their forays to the British Isles, they founded the city of Dublin in AD 841, and began the transformation of York (or Jórvik, as they called it) two decades later. Elsewhere, Northmen – or Normanni – would eventually gain a permanent foothold in northern France through marriage, forming what would become Normandy. Iceland's settlement can largely be attributed to colonists led by Ingólfr Arnarson (*right*) in AD 874, while in the east, Vikings made it all the way to Constantinople (now Istanbul), where several thousand formed an elite and much-vaunted corps loyal to the emperor – the Varangian Guard.

2

THEY WERE ILLITERATE

▲ Though their epic sagas did not start appearing in writing until around the 12th century, the Vikings did have a script during their heyday: runes. Runic alphabets, or *futharks*, were used on all sorts of objects. They could be inscribed on huge memorial 'runestones' – including the Jelling Stone (*above*), raised by Harald Bluetooth in memory of his parents, Gorm and Thyra, and which also gives an account of his own achievements – or on smaller items, such as weapons and even combs.

THEY WORE HORNED HELMETS

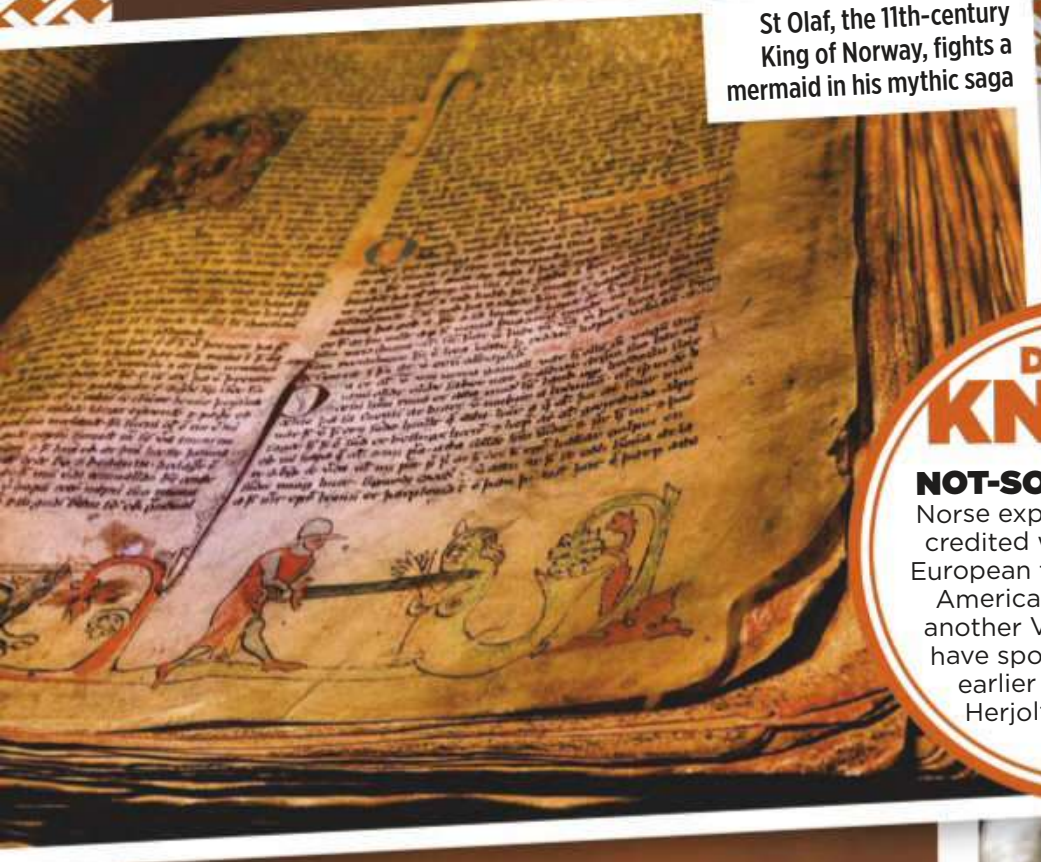
▼ There is no evidence, archaeological or otherwise, of the horned helmets – Vikings wore skullcaps, a much more effective form of protection in battle. The horned helmet notion originates from the 19th century and Richard Wagner's *The Ring Cycle* operas (*below*), when costume designer Carl Emil Doepler conjured the idea of a cow-horned helmet for the Viking characters. That was in 1876, and the trope has persisted ever since.

3

4

THEY WERE GODLESS

◀ This was true from the perspective of a Christian – especially if they witnessed Viking warriors raid churches and monasteries and butchering members of the clergy. But the reality was that Norse religion was complex, with a pantheon of gods (including Thor, seen here accidentally hooking Jormungand the world-serpent while on a fishing trip with the giant Hymir), multiple realms, and a panoply of rituals and ceremonies.



St Olaf, the 11th-century King of Norway, fights a mermaid in his mythic saga

DID YOU KNOW?

NOT-SO-NEW WORLD

Norse explorer Leif Erikson is credited with being the first European to set foot on North America, in c1000 AD, but another Viking is thought to have spotted the land even earlier than that: Bjarni Herjolfsson, in around AD 985.

EXPLORING THE SAGAS (AND WHAT THEY CAN TELL US...)

The sagas spin an epic yarn, yet they also offer a glimpse of everyday Viking life

The sagas – a name derived from the Old Norse for 'story', 'tale' or 'history' – were a series of epic tales describing the mythology, legends and histories of the Viking world, penned after the Viking Age. Predominantly written in Iceland in the 12th and 15th centuries in a combination of poetry and prose, the sagas recounted great feats of daring, outlandish voyages into the unknown and bloody clashes in rip-roaring narratives as gripping as any novel.

The myriad sagas can typically be classified as belonging to one of three groups: the 'legendary sagas' (*fornaldarsögur*) were semi-mythic tales that take place before the colonisation of Iceland; the 'kings' sagas' (*konungasögur*) told of the lives and deeds of Scandinavia's pre-Christian kings; and the 'family' or 'Icelander sagas' (*Íslendingasögur*) were almost-contemporary accounts related to the settlement of Iceland – complete with blood feuds. Adjacent to these three groups were the collections of writings called the 'Poetic Edda' and 'Prose Edda', thought to have been compiled by the 13th-century Icelandic scholar Snorri Sturluson, detailing Norse mythology.

But what value do the sagas have beyond being fantastic stories? Historian Philip Parker notes that while events described in the sagas may not adhere to literal truth, the backdrop against which many were set, both socially and geographically, is worth attention. "In the 'family sagas', you can trace actual places in the landscape both in Iceland and in Scandinavia where they are alleged to have taken place", he says. "The kind of ways in which people act is real, the ways in which they live, the places they live – those are real."

There are glimpses of historical detail in the other sagas, too, as some feature real people. "There's one for Harold Hardrada, for example," says Parker. "The sagas have a certain historical relevance and usefulness, but you've got to have an eye on the fact that they were composed for an audience, not necessarily as an accurate historical record."

"YOU CAN NOT SAY MORE THAN A FEW SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AND NOT USE A WORD THAT WE GOT FROM THE VIKINGS"

would have shocked and appalled a literate, Christian audience.

Yet it goes without saying that the Vikings were not alone in being violent in battle and not particularly kind to civilians, so they were not necessarily more deserving of such a blood-soaked reputation than anybody else. Charlemagne, whose place in the historical record is of a wise, literate, strong and Christian ruler, was not above crucifying hundreds of Saxons who he claimed rebelled against him. Yet, critically, they were pagan, which meant Charlemagne did not get recorded in the Christian accounts as a brutal barbarian.

Q: Did their contemporary reputation have any impact on the Vikings?

A: Later on, I think the Vikings were aware of their reputation to the point of exploiting it. Being known as vicious warriors had its advantages, as their enemies came to be afraid of just the mention of them. Sometimes, half the battle was done before it even started.

In the Viking sagas and other non-saga records, it's clear that in common with many traditional Germanic societies, the most important thing to a person, particularly a male warrior, was their reputation. In pre-literate and early literate societies, the things people are saying about you are what matters and what lives on after you. It was your afterlife, in a way. And so glory, bravery in battle and doing great deeds would have been really important. The Vikings may have been quite happy to be paid off on occasion – because they wanted loot as well – but they would have been strongly motivated to fight because they wanted to be remembered for doing great things.

Q: As well as raiders, the Vikings were traders, explorers and

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X1

settlers. Is this a transition they went through as a culture, or did it happen all at once?

A: Trading and raiding were almost interchangeable. The same boat carrying Vikings intent on raiding also carried men open to trade, too, depending on chance and circumstance. Going back to that pre-Lindisfarne raid in the southwest of England, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* described how the royal reeve, who supervised important trading, came down to meet a Viking boat as he thought they may be traders. They were not, and they killed him. But the event demonstrates that when a boat arrived off the shore, it was not always possible to know the motives of the men aboard.

To begin with, the Vikings came in the spring and returned to their homelands in late summer, before the weather became too hazardous to cross over the North Sea. But as time went on, they began to overwinter. This meant that groups of men started staying for years at a time rather than months, and they would gradually become the nucleus of Viking communities.

In AD 865, the Great Heathen Army invaded England, and stayed for decades as they faced Alfred the Great and conquered the city of York, going a long way to establish the first Viking kingdom in England. As more men stayed in foreign lands, raiding gave way to conquest. That was the case in France and Ireland as well.

In some areas, the Vikings explored near-virgin or lightly settled territory, such as in Iceland, Greenland and as far as North America. As there wouldn't have been much opportunity for trade or plunder, these were voyages of exploration, to see what was out there, to map out distant lands, and discover anything worth taking.

ABOVE: **Vikings and Anglo-Saxons clash in the annual Viking Festival in York; the real Vikings captured the city in AD 866**

ABOVE RIGHT: **Norse explorer Erik the Red sails his longboat to the shore of Greenland c982 AD**

TOP RIGHT: **The Great Heathen Army spent years trying to conquer the English kingdoms, until being defeated by Alfred the Great**

Q: How influential were the Vikings on the early medieval world?

A: They transformed the societies they encountered. In Ireland, they played a role in the simplification of what was a complex political structure, while in France they weakened the kingdom of Charlemagne, which would fall apart after his death. The Vikings were often catalysts that accelerated, or impeded, political changes.

In Britain, they left an important linguistic legacy. Basic words, such as 'sky' and 'window' are derived from Old Norse. In fact, you can't say more than a few sentences in English and not find that you use a word that we've inherited from the Vikings.

Q: What do you think continues to make the Vikings so fascinating to us today?

A: They have this transgressive element. By seeing the peoples of Scandinavia as 'Viking', it makes theirs an ambivalent culture that brings together opposites. They were violent, and yet had a sense of honour, artistic expression and political structure. They had real motives of what they did, a real code about the way went about things, and a sense of diplomacy and larger strategy. It's a north European culture, too. In the Anglo-Saxon world writ large, there's a fascination about these people who contributed to the roots of our politics, culture and society. And then you've got the Viking sagas – great stories about the Vikings that they were able to tell themselves.

THE AGE OF THE

They came, they saw... they raided and traded, butchered and built,

AD c787

FIRST CONTACT

Viking longships are seen for the first time, lurking with intent off the Wessex coast.

AD 792

THREATENED COAST

Mercian king Offa records in a charter of the need to prepare defences in Kent against the "pagan sailors".

AD 793

HORRORS ON HOLY ISLAND

The tidal island monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria becomes the first known site of a Viking raid. News of the invaders spreads across Europe; many Christians view their arrival as a sign of the Apocalypse.

AD 838

MY ENEMY'S ENEMY

The Battle of Hingston Down in Cornwall sees an alliance of Vikings and Cornishmen defeated by their common enemy, the Wessex Saxons led by King Egbert.

AD 840-41

ESTABLISHING ROOTS

A Viking fleet overwinters on the shores of Ireland and builds a *longphort* (a type of ship harbour) on the site of modern-day Dublin The settlement is named Dyflin.

AD 844

MOVING SOUTH

The cities of Lisbon and Seville – part of a Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula – are sacked by a Viking raiding party, which is then defeated by a Muslim force at Tablada near Seville.

c985 AD

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Explorer Bjarni Herjólfsson becomes the first Viking (and European) to see North America, but doesn't make landfall.

AD 982-86

A TIME OF DISCOVERY

Banished from Iceland, Erik the Red explores Greenland, creating the first successful settlement there.

AD 980

EXPANDING EMPIRE

With the help of Haakon Sigurdsson, de facto ruler of Norway, Vladimir the Great consolidates the territory of the Kievan Rus, which now stretches from Ukraine to the Baltic Sea.

c965 AD

WRITTEN IN STONE

Harald Bluetooth orders a runestone declaring that he "won for himself all of Denmark and Norway and made the Danes Christian". The Jelling Stone is known as Denmark's birth certificate.

AD 954

THE END OF ERIC BLOODAXE

The King of Viking Northumbria, Eric Bloodaxe, is driven out of York and killed by his own people. His kingdom becomes part of a larger English realm.

AD 927

REPELLING THE INVADERS

Alfred the Great's grandson, Æthelstan, reclaims Viking-held York and becomes the first ruler of all Anglo-Saxon England.

AD 988

MIGHT OF THE NORSEMEN

The Varangian Guard comes into existence after Byzantine Emperor Basil II employs Norse warriors.

AD 991

HEROIC DEFEAT

The English are defeated by a large Viking army at the Battle of Maldon in Essex. The victors are given the first of many 'Danegeld' payments (a tax to buy off the Viking invaders).

c1000

A NEW WORLD

Leif Erikson lands in North America, naming it Vínland due to the wild grapes growing there. According to the sagas, hostility from the Native Americans meant that the settlement (in modern-day Newfoundland) is abandoned after just a few years.

1002

SANCTIONED MASSACRE

Following military successes against Viking leaders, Brian Boru becomes the first High King of all Ireland. In England, King Æthelred the Unready gives orders for all Danish people to be slain on Saint Brice's Day.

1013

REVENGE OF THE DANES

Avenging the Saint Brice's Day massacre, Danish King Sweyn Forkbeard invades England. He seizes control, becoming King of Denmark and England. In 1028, his son, Cnut the Great, adds Norway to his mighty kingdom.

1014

IRISH STRIFE

Brian Boru's army beats a Viking–Irish alliance of Sitric Silkbeard (Nordic King of Dublin) and Máel Mórda mac Murchada (Irish King of Leinster) at the Battle of Clontarf. Brain Boru is killed.

VIKINGS

and explored the edges of the known world

AD 845

PILLAGE IN PARIS

A large Viking fleet under the leadership of Ragnar (possibly the legendary hero Ragnar Lodbrok), sails down the Seine and sacks Paris. The city would be attacked again in the 860s and 880s.

AD 855

HERE TO STAY

The Isle of Sheppey in Kent, part of Wessex, becomes the first location of a Viking army overwintering on mainland Britain.

c862 AD

TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

The near-mythical Viking leader, Rurik, founds the Kievan Rus state in the territory of Novgorod, western Russia, allegedly at the invitation of its Slavic inhabitants. Rurik's long lasting dynasty dominates trade across the Baltic, Black and Caspian seas.

AD 866

MAKING THEIR MARK

The 'Great Heathen Army' – a Viking invasion force that had landed in England the previous year – captures York. They settle there and rename it Jórvík .

AD 869

A RIGHT ROYAL PROBLEM

King Edmund of East Anglia is overthrown and killed by the Vikings, who take over his kingdom.

AD 870

VIKING SIEGE

Irish Vikings besiege the Strathclyde royal stronghold of Dumbarton.

AD 921–2

DIPLOMATIC MISSION

Ahmad ibn Fadlān travels from Baghdad to meet the King of the Volga Bulgars. The record of his journey provides a colourful account of the appearance and behaviours of the Viking Rus he meets on the way.

AD 911

LAND OF NORTHMEN

After besieging Chartres, the Norse leader Rollo seals the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte with the King of West Francia, making him the first Duke of Normandy.

899 AD

BIRTH OF A NATION

Edward 'the Elder' becomes ruler of Wessex after the death of his father, Alfred. During his reign, he conquers areas previously held by the Vikings, and extends his authority over almost all of England.

AD 878

ALFRED WINS FOR WESSEX

At the Battle of Edington, Alfred the Great defeats the Viking King Guthrum, who is then forced to convert to Christianity and withdraw his army to East Anglia.

AD 874

THE FRONTIER MOVES WEST

Norse explorer Ingólfur Arnarson founds Reykjavík, becoming Iceland's first long-term settler. The Icelandic Age of Settlement begins; it will last until AD 930.

AD 871

WAR FOR WESSEX

Nine battles are fought by the Vikings for control over the kingdom of Wessex. Alfred the Great ascends the throne and pays them to leave Wessex alone.

1016

VIKING CONQUEROR

Cnut is crowned King of the English.

1035

CHAOS AND CONFLICT

Cnut dies in Shaftesbury, Dorset, and his two sons, born of different mothers, squabble over the control of his kingdoms.

1066

END OF AN ERA?

The last great Viking king, Harald Hardrada of Norway, is defeated at Stamford Bridge by English King Harold Godwinson. The Battle of Hastings swiftly follows, signalling the start of the Norman Conquest.

GETTY IMAGES X9, ALAMY X3

The Vikings pointed the monstrous figureheads of their longships towards uncharted waters and sailed the world, from Russia to North America

RAIDERS, TRADERS AND EXPLORERS

Exceptional explorers, the Vikings left their mark everywhere they went… and they went to a lot of places

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

Masters of the waters, fearless and ambitious, and driven by a need to raid, trade and explore, the Vikings travelled huge distances in their voyages of exploration. They were pioneers, building advanced ships capable of traversing massive oceans. They were adventurers, heading off into the unknown and facing violent resistance to settle in harsh and unforgiving lands. They were savvy merchants, taking control of major trade routes and becoming rich by transporting goods from across their domains. And they were ambassadors of their culture, with Scandinavian influence spreading to civilisations far and wide.

From their first bloody appearances in the late-eighth century, the Vikings came to dominate in Europe. Their explorers came to call the British Isles and Ireland home and they manoeuvred along the coasts of Europe, from Francia to the Iberian Peninsula to the Mediterranean. They did deals with Byzantine emperors; sailed the longest river in Europe, the Volga; and established a ruling dynasty in what is now Russia – a country that is named after them.

To the west, the Vikings set sail across the Atlantic Ocean, building settlements on Iceland and Greenland, before becoming the first Europeans to set foot on North America. They were the greatest explorers of their age.

GETTY IMAGES X5

ENGLAND

The Vikings stormed into the historical record in AD 793 with their shock raid on Lindisfarne, off the coast of Northumbria. It wasn't the first time they had appeared in England, but the attack certainly made an entrance. "The woeful inroads of heathen men destroyed God's church in Lindisfarne island by fierce robbery and slaughter," read the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Hit-and-run raids of this nature continued during the ninth century and Vikings began to overwinter in England. Then, in AD 865, the Great Heathen Army landed with conquest on its mind. Led by Halfdan Raganarsson and Ivar the Boneless (who were alleged sons of the legendary Ragnar Lothbrok), the army then overran the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia, leaving just one, Wessex, still standing.

Under King Æthelred and then his brother, Alfred the Great, Wessex would unfathomably resist the Great Heathen Army and the trials that followed. A new Viking force under Guthrum surprised and defeated Alfred at Chippenham in AD 878, forcing the king to flee and take refuge in the Somerset Marshes. Their control over Wessex was short-lived, though, as Alfred rallied his forces and triumphed at the Battle of Edington later that year.

In the wake of this stunning reverse, Guthrum was forced to convert to Christianity and the Vikings withdrew. Yet around half of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms remained under Danish control, a region known as the 'Danelaw'. The struggles between Saxons and Northmen would continue, and it wouldn't be until the 920s and the reign of Alfred's grandson, Æthelstan, that 'England' was united under a single, Christian king.

Four Viking kings would be proclaimed in England during the 11th century, starting with the ruler of the Danes, Sweyn Forkbeard, in 1013. He invaded multiple times to avenge the 1002 St Brice's Day massacre, the mass slaying of Danish people in England on the command of Æthelred the Unready (a name meaning 'ill counselled' rather than actually 'unready'), before finally seizing the throne. His reign lasted only a couple of months.

The second was Æthelred's son Cnut, who came to the throne of England in 1016, following a brief second reign of Æthelred and a briefer reign of his son Edmund. Cnut – who later became known as 'the Great' and apocryphally tried to command the tide – also gained the crowns of Denmark and Norway by 1028, creating something akin to a Viking empire.

Cnut's sons Harold Harefoot (who reigned 1035–40) and Harthacnut (r1040-42) followed, before the English crown fell to Edward the Confessor and then the final Anglo-Saxon king, Harold Godwinson. The dispute over his succession brought about what's regarded as the last great Viking invasion – led by Harald Hardrada, who was defeated at Stamford Bridge – and the arrival of William of Normandy, himself the descendant of a Viking, who heralded a new dawn for England.

Alfred the Great *(far right as a statue in his birthplace, Wantage)* defeated the Vikings in AD 878, but they didn't leave England; Æthelred the Unready (*this rare coin comes from his reign*) invited their wrath by massacring Danes

SCOTLAND, IRELAND AND WALES

During the ninth century, around the time Vikings landed on the shores of eastern England, Norsemen were invading and colonising many of the islands off the coast of Scotland. Much of Orkney, Shetland and the Hebrides fell to Viking rule, as did Caithness and Sutherland, historic counties at the northern tip of mainland Scotland. While the overthrow of Pict leaders ensured the spread of Scandinavian influence, it also precipitated a union between the Picts and Scots, which ultimately led to the establishment of Alba by the mid-9th century, the kingdom which later became Scotland.

The presence of Vikings in Ireland, like Scotland, inspired the unification of the country in 1002 under the rule of Brian Boru. No stranger to lightning raids by the Danes, Ireland experienced two significant invasions in the ninth and early-10th centuries, but never experienced full colonisation. As they assimilated into society, Viking relations with the natives were fragile and, although alliances were occasionally formed between the Scandinavians and various regions, the presence of the invaders served to strengthen Ireland's unity against them.

Wales's kings similarly resisted Viking colonisation. These included Rhodri the Great who, in AD 856, as ruler of the kingdom of Gwynedd, defeated Danish forces who had earlier ravaged the island of Anglesey. The Scandinavians had more success in west Wales, where they set up a number of settlements on the coastline, particularly in Pembrokeshire and on the Gower peninsula. The Welsh and the Vikings did collaborate on occasion, such as the alliance that defeated an Anglo-Saxon army from Mercia in AD 878. At other times, they were in opposition, such as when they joined with Wessex Anglo-Saxons to force a Viking retreat along the River Severn and defeat them at the Battle of Buttington in AD 893.

A reenactment of the Viking invasion of Anglesey, which met fierce Welsh resistance

The archaeological site of Jarlshof in Shetland, Scotland, home to Norse settlers for centuries

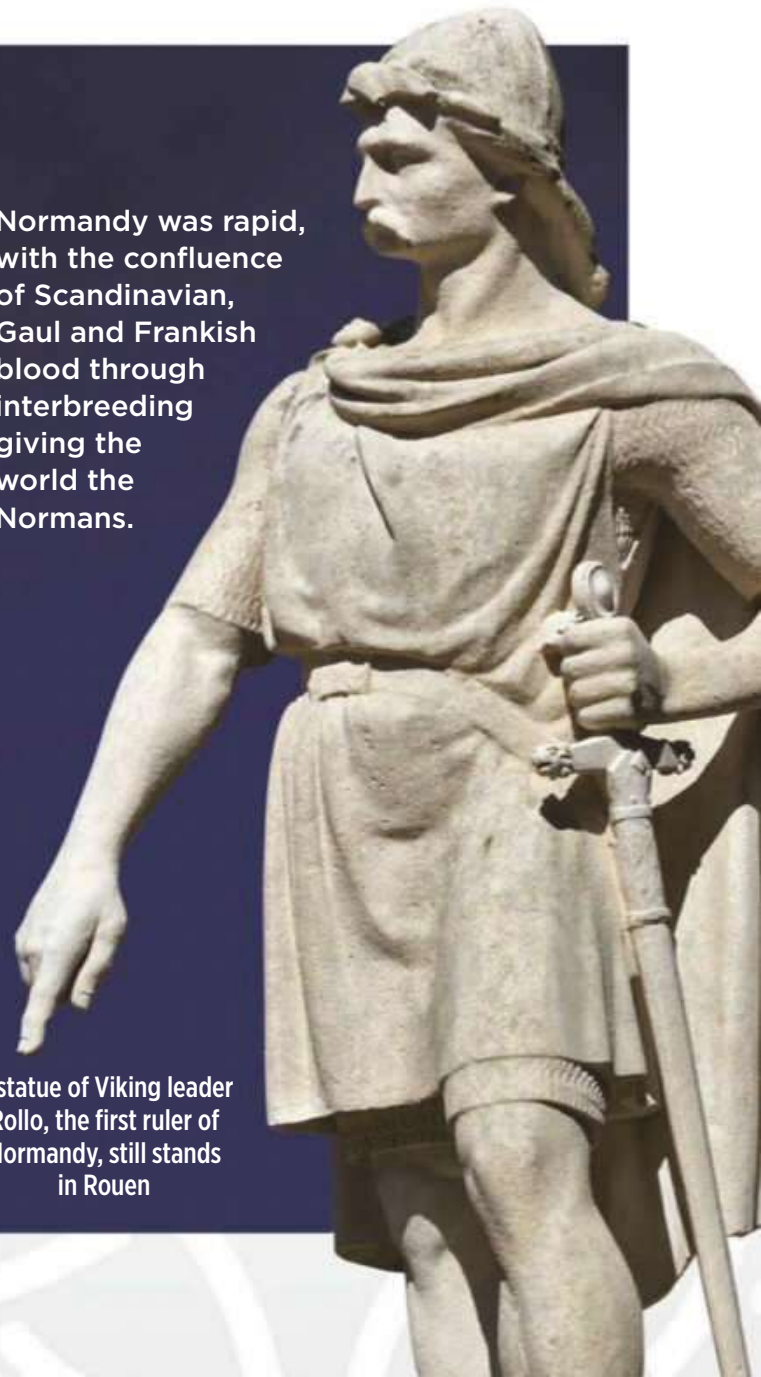
FRISIA AND FRANCIA

The Vikings (yet again) lay siege to Paris, the capital of West Francia, in AD 885

The Vikings settled in parts of Frisia – an area covering the coastal area of present-day Netherlands and the North Sea coast of Germany – from the mid-ninth century onwards, but their presence there was far from controlling. Indeed, they were gradually expelled from the region, from around AD 885, not that this brought an end to sporadic and opportunistic raids by the invaders from the north.

More long-lasting evidence of Viking power could be found in Francia, the region now covered by France, Belgium and Germany. Central and western Francia were particularly affected by the Scandinavians' incursions as their attacks took full advantage of regions weakened by internal struggles and civil war. The Vikings fiercely raided and ransacked many towns and cities, while establishing significant long-term settlements all along the western coast, becoming bases from which further exploration to other lands would be possible.

To the north, Normandy still bears evidence of the Viking occupation as its name means 'Land of the Northmen'. In AD 911, a treaty negotiated between King of Francia Charles III (aka Charles the Simple) and the Viking leader Rollo, drawn up after the latter's attacks on Paris and Chartres, ceded land in Normandy to the Vikings. Rollo became ruler of Normandy, married a Francian princess, and had a son, William Longsword (most probably by his second wife, Poppa of Bayeux) – the great-great-grandfather of William the Conqueror. Viking assimilation into Normandy was rapid, with the confluence of Scandinavian, Gaul and Frankish blood through interbreeding giving the world the Normans.



A statue of Viking leader Rollo, the first ruler of Normandy, still stands in Rouen

ALAMY X3, GETTY IMAGES X4

HOW THE VIKINGS DREW A NEW MAP OF THE WORLD

The Vikings never had an empire, but their reach had the ambition and success of one

IBERIA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

For the Vikings to turn their attention to forays in and around the Iberian Peninsula was a natural extension of their activities in northern Europe. They were not, however, as successful when it came to long-term economic and political penetration, thanks to arguably the stiffest resistance they encountered during their entire programme of exploration.

Their first raid was in AD 844 and saw a 100-strong fleet sail from Aquitaine in southwest France to attack the cities of Gijón and La Coruña. After meeting opposition from the native Asturians, the fleet continued south and launched an extended raid on Lisbon before heading on to Andalusia, where they attacked both Cadiz and Seville. Resistance was again strong, this time from the forces of the Muslim caliphate of Abd al-Rahman II. The Vikings were forced to retreat to France.

A decade and a half later, between AD 859 and 862, they launched a more sustained exploration of the Iberian Peninsula and Mediterranean. An expedition of 62 ships led by brothers Hastein and Björn Ironside again suffered defeats to both the Asturians and the Caliphate of Córdoba, but managed to breach the heavily guarded entrance to the Mediterranean, where their raids were numerous and well rewarded.

As well as attacks on more strongholds in southern Spain, the Vikings made their presence felt right across the basin, raiding settlements on both the French coast and its interior, as well as in North Africa, the Balearic Islands and northern Italy.

Their ships loaded with slaves from Africa – but now a third of the size of the original fleet – the Scandinavians managed to fight their way through yet more skirmishes at the mouth of the Mediterranean and headed back north to the safety of southwest France.

DID YOU KNOW?

ACT OF LUNA-CY

When the Vikings attacked Luna, they believed the Italian city to be Rome. Their leader Hastein pretended to be dying and asked to be converted to Christianity, but once he was let inside, he miraculously recovered and led a sack of the city.

Every year, a day of festivities in Catoira celebrates the defence of the Spanish region of Galicia from invading Vikings

DID YOU KNOW?

SAINT VLADIMIR

By AD 988, Vladimir the Great, a descendent of Rurik, consolidated Kievan Rus from modern-day Ukraine to the Baltic Sea after being overthrown by his own brother. He was then baptised and converted the entire region to Christianity.

THE EAST AND BYZANTINE

There were rumours that Hastein and Björn Ironside's expeditions across the Mediterranean Basin had reached the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. Whether true or not, the Vikings would get to the city by other means, lured by its riches and trade opportunities.

Heading east from the ninth century onwards, these Vikings became known as the Rus, a moniker that lives on in the names of two countries, Russia and Belarus. They charted a course across the Baltic Sea and deep into mainland eastern Europe, via the Volga and Dnieper Rivers, taking command of local trade routes from the native population of Slavic tribes, which, in turn, fed into markets where they could deal with prosperous caliphates in the Middle East.

The Rus became both very powerful and very rich. They established a ruling dynasty under their ruler Rurik and, from AD 879, formed the Kievan Rus state, based in Kiev. This dynasty controlled a huge trade network and would go on to last seven centuries.

Constantinople, though, remained a great prize in their eyes. The Rus launched a series of assaults, but failed to take control of this strategically vital and wealthy city. Some Rus were actually co-opted to defend Constantinople when, in AD 988, their ruler, Vladimir the Great, gave Byzantine emperor Basil II some 6,000 of his men to form a mercenary brigade, the Varangian Guard.

The assimilation of the Rus throughout eastern Europe led to widespread marriages with women from various Slavic tribes. This interbreeding led to the rise of a significant new ethnic delineation. The Russians were born.

From his capital of Novgorod, Rurik (*far left*) established a dynasty that lasted seven centuries

The 'Sun Voyager' sculpture on Reykjavík's waterfront resembles a Viking longship

ICELAND AND GREENLAND

The settlement of Iceland was far different than the Viking activity in Britain and mainland Europe. The landmass was discovered accidentally by Naddod who, sailing from Norway to the Faroe Islands, got lost and landed on the eastern Icelandic coast. The first permanent settler is believed to have been Norwegian chieftain Ingólfr Arnarson in around AD 874. He settled in the southwest of the island, naming it Reykjavík, on account of the geothermal steam he saw there (the word means 'Bay of Smokes').

As Iceland was unsettled land, there were no locals to divide and conquer and so no bloody turmoil when the Vikings arrived. The Age of Settlement was, therefore, peaceful, lasting until around AD 930 – by which time the entire island had been claimed and an assembly, the Althing (the world's oldest surviving parliament) formed. As many as 24,000 Scandinavians are thought to have made Iceland their new home.

Around 50 years later, in the AD 980s, Greenland was also discovered. It was first reached by an Icelander, Erik the Red, who had left Norway with his father, Thorvald, who had been exiled for manslaughter.

A modest number of settlements grew there, with the climate – in the southwest quarter, at least – just about usable for arable, cattle and sheep farming. A major export was walrus ivory. Greenland became a dependency of the King of Norway in 1261, but the early years of the Little Ice Age rendered the climate too inhospitable, leading to Viking settlements being abandoned and Greenland's links with Norway and Iceland dissolved.

Erik the Red discovered Greenland in the AD 980s

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X3

NORTH AMERICA

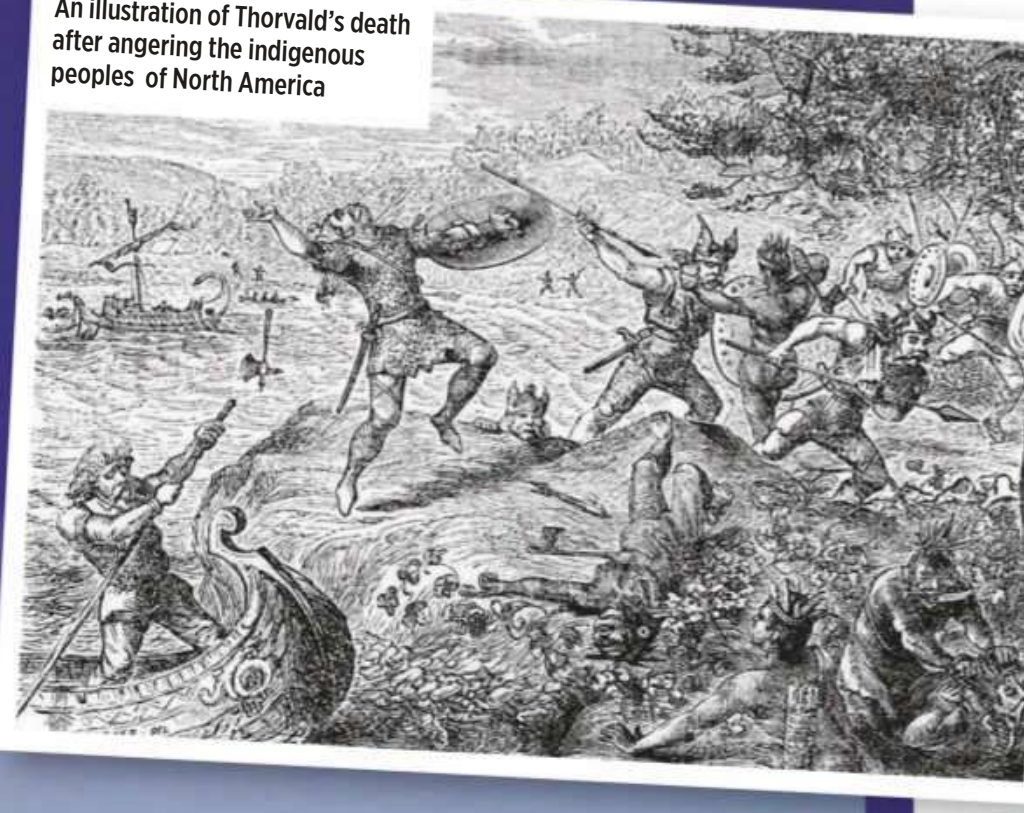
Ask a group of schoolchildren who the first European to set foot in the Americas was and their answers, almost invariably, will be Christopher Columbus or just possibly Amerigo Vespucci or John Cabot. Of course, they would be wide of the mark by around 500 years as that honour belongs to a Viking, Leif Erikson, who landed in the New World around the year 1000 and established a settlement.

Exploration was clearly the family trade as Erikson's father was Erik the Red, the man who discovered Greenland. As for Erikson, he was on a mission to find territory that he already knew existed. Around 14 years earlier, an explorer named Bjarni Herjólfsson had spotted lands while on a voyage some way west of Greenland, but he hadn't gone ashore. Erikson, using Herjólfsson's boat and a three-dozen-strong crew, retraced the original journey, which would have been a distance of some 1,500 miles.

These new lands, on the eastern reaches of contemporary Canada, were far more bounteous than the terrain Erikson had left back in Greenland. The climate was more welcoming, food was plentiful in the form of native animals, there were lots of trees for building, and the soil was fertile.

Unlike Iceland and Greenland, however, the Vikings found a human population living there. The Inuit and First Nation tribes weren't all that welcoming towards the newcomers in their territory, but the Vikings were not very friendly towards them either. Erikson's brother, Thorvald, ordered an attack on an indigenous group, a decision he paid for with his life in the violent response.

Freydis Eiriksdóttir, the brothers' sister, was among around a hundred people who landed to establish a settlement a decade or so after Erikson's arrival, and who were successful in trading with the local people. But it was an uneasy peace. Continual conflicts, along with the New World's distance from the rest of the Viking world, meant the colony never bloomed.



An illustration of Thorvald's death after angering the indigenous peoples of North America

Leif Erikson – this grand statue stands in Reykjavik, Iceland – was the first European on North American soil; once there, the Vikings established a settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows (*pictured*)

FORESTAY
Part of the rigging of the sail, a rope – possibly made from animal skin or wood fibres – was used to connect the bow of the longship to the mast.

SAILS AND MAST
The huge square sails were hugely time-consuming to make. Made of woven wool, they could measure up to 100 square metres in size. Masts were often collapsible, to make fighting in battle easier.

KEEL
This was the backbone of the longship, made of planks of oak and waterproofed with animal hair or wool and pine-tree tar.

FIGUREHEADS
The bow – the first part of a longship to be seen – was usually decorated, often as a dragon or snake, to inflict fear as the ship approached.

DID YOU KNOW?

MONSTER OF A SHIP
It has been claimed that the largest longship ever built belonged to Olaf Tryggvason, a late-10th-century King of Norway. The *Long Serpent* supposedly had 34 rowing benches and may have been more than 45 metres long.

RULERS OF THE WAVES

Expertly designed longships carried the Vikings across the seas

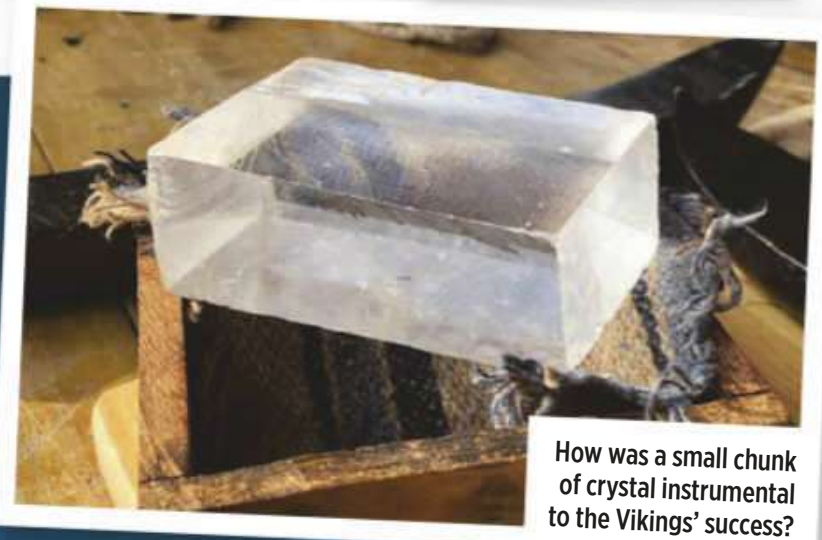
WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

One of the secrets behind the Vikings' successful explorations, trading voyages and conquests was their skill in shipbuilding. For Norwegian Vikings, fjords were more navigable than traversing the land, so sailing became a cornerstone of life. Many Vikings were experienced fishermen, but they also relished the adventure of open water. The powerhouse of the Viking Age, taking them to locations such as Russia and North America, was the longship.

"The Vikings began with a tradition of what's called clinker-built ships, built with overlapping planks nailed together with wooden or iron nails," says historian Philip Parker. "These were flexible, strong, didn't leak and very seaworthy. Steering oars were later added for navigation and then, in the eighth century, sails. This created swift seaworthy ships, capable of crossing significant distances."

Viking longships were the most advanced boats of the medieval period – speedy and manoeuvrable, yet sturdy and powerful. Ships were typically between 15 and 25 metres long, could hold up to 60 oarsmen and reach an average speed of 10 knots, powered by oars and the wind, which was caught by one large, square sail. What's more, their shallow draft allowed them to sail right up to the shoreline and unload raiding parties in the quickest time possible.

The cargo carried by longships depended on the type of journey it was undertaking. Exploratory missions needed food and supplies, as well as equipment to aid in the settling of an area, including livestock. Trading journeys saw ships filled with valuable goods, while raiding voyages meant loading weapons, whilst leaving space for any pilfered treasure.



How was a small chunk of crystal instrumental to the Vikings' success?

SUNSTONE OF THE SAGAS

The Vikings were way ahead of their time when it came to crystal-clear navigation

As sailing was an essential part of life in the Vikings' homelands, they had to be exceptional navigators. Seas were crossed using the positions of sun or stars, as well as highly tuned senses, but not all Viking navigational techniques have always been fully understood. In a medieval Icelandic saga, there is a mention of a 'sunstone', which helped navigators find the sun in an overcast sky. Sunstones were considered mere legend until a crystal was uncovered amongst navigation equipment in a sunken Tudor shipwreck. When held up to the sky, this Iceland spar (a type of calcite), creates a solar compass through concentric rings of polarised light – even at dusk or when the sky is overcast – giving the location of the sun. It is thought that this nifty natural tool may have been the key to the Vikings' sea adventures and its use persisted long after the Viking Age.

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1

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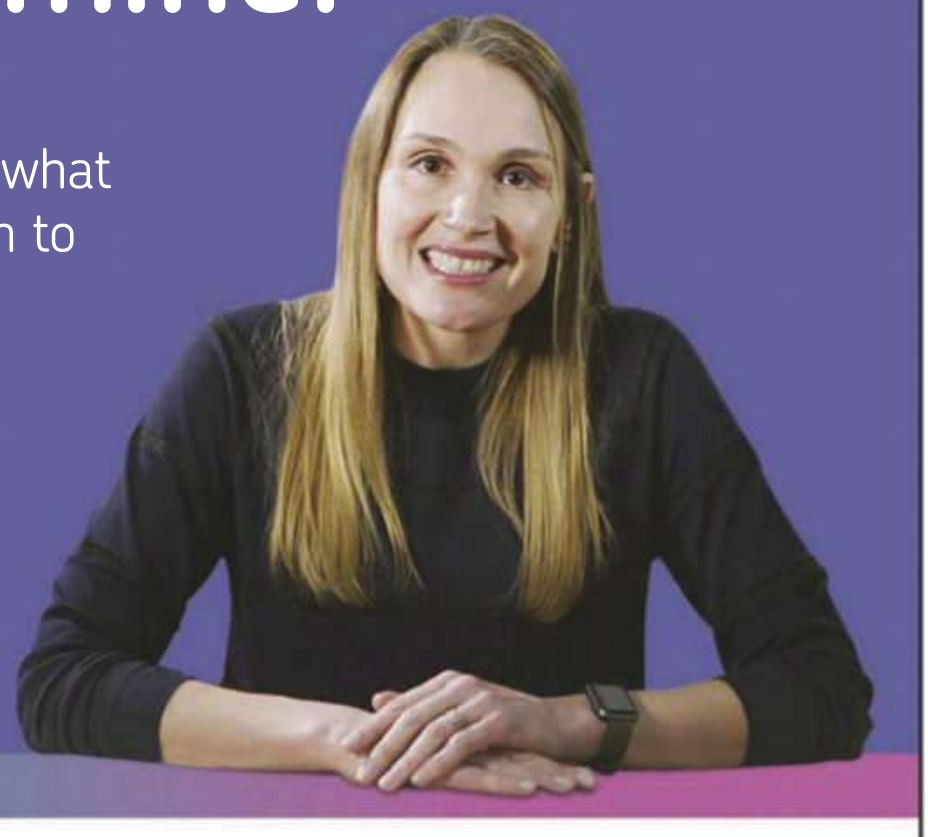
Anna Hunt



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WARRIORS AND WARFARE

Being a mighty warrior was more than just winning battles to the Vikings – it was the path to the afterlife

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

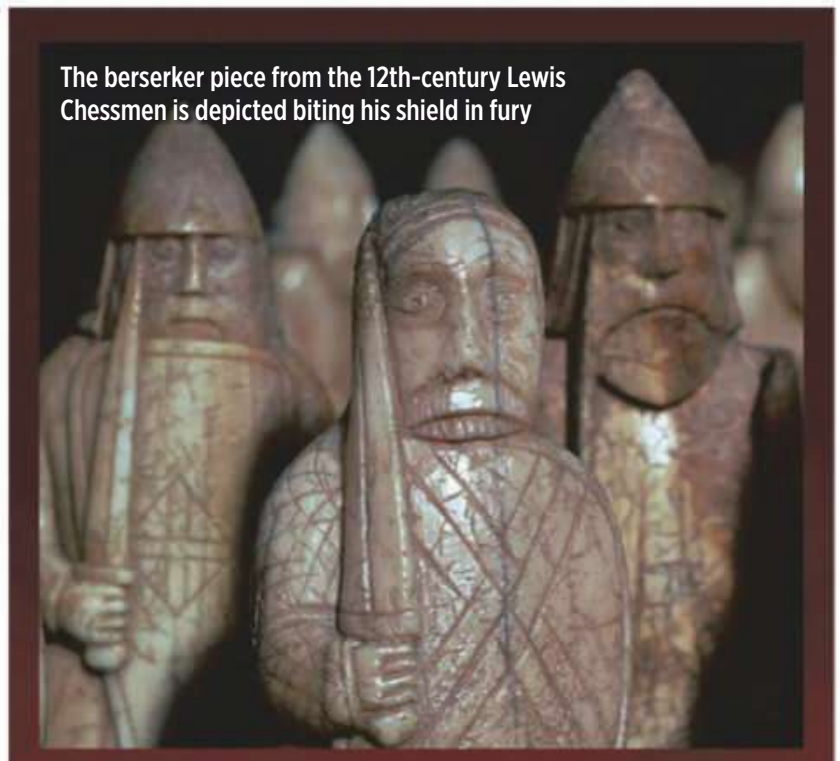
Earning glory in battle and proving yourself as a great warrior were both highly prized goals for a Viking fighter, especially since entry to Valhalla (the great hall of slain warriors, from Norse mythology) was by dying in battle. So, although the Vikings had no professional standing armies, they grew up with weapons in their hands, trained in the ways of war and prepared to die a bloody and honourable death.

Bands of warriors owed allegiance to their local chieftain or *jarl*, who could call on them to fight or raid. Viking warbands were relatively small, and since venturing far from home meant they could not call for reinforcements the Vikings became experts at hit-and-run surprise attacks. Their shallow draft longships allowed them to jump out where they liked and strike hard and fast against an unsuspecting enemy, often taking them by surprise. This tactic was most effective against undefended coastal villages or treasure filled monasteries.

Relying on surprise attacks meant battles were regularly chaotic. Vikings could use spears and bow and arrows for long-distance fighting, but preferred hand-to-hand melee-style weapons, such as daggers, axes and – the most precious of all – swords. Weapons were status symbols for Vikings, and would often be highly decorated or inlaid with precious metals. For protection, most warriors wore a bowl-shaped helmet and carried a round wooden shield, but had little else in the way of armour. Chainmail was expensive, so would only be owned by the wealthiest men.

A tactic often deployed in battle was *svinfylking*, meaning 'swine order' due to its resemblance to a boar's snout. Warriors lined up in a wedge formation, making it difficult for the enemy to penetrate without being cut down.

The shield wall was another Viking speciality. By standing shoulder to shoulder and locking shields to make one impenetrable wall, the warriors kept themselves protected whilst still thrusting with their weapons. While they did not use cavalry tactics in battle, the Vikings were skilled horsemen, so could travel quickly once inland.



The berserker piece from the 12th-century Lewis Chessmen is depicted biting his shield in fury

GOING BERSERK

Berserkers were an even more terrifying version of the Viking warrior

Viking sagas and folklore contain descriptions of a group of warriors so fierce that they fought in an almost trance-like state of fury, wielding near-supernatural strength while feeling no pain. These 'berserkers' may seem a fantastical embellishment, yet they may well have existed. Berserkers were a highly skilled group of warriors associated with the god Odin. They wore little to protect themselves, but were a terrifying sight in battle. Difficult to control, they tended to act independently in battles rather than be used in formations.

Theories suggest that these bloodthirsty warriors consumed hallucinogenic substances or performed group rituals to induce a trance. Psychiatrists have proposed that this could have caused them to lose awareness of their actions, and increase their aggression and strength. Historian Philip Parker, however, believes berserkers were less prevalent than the sagas imply, but were used to feed the fearsome Viking reputation: "I think berserkers were part of Viking propaganda", he says. "The Vikings were happy to allow the idea to be propagated that not only did they have a ferocious, well-armed, motivated, unpredictable fighting force, but if things get tough, they'll just go berserk."

VIKINGS FOR HIRE

Skilled Viking warriors made formidable imperial guards

The Viking reputation for ferocity and fearlessness reached the ears of Byzantine Emperor Basil II (r976–1025). So impressed was he that, in AD 988, he began to employ warriors from Scandinavia, known as Varangians, as his personal bodyguard. Based in Constantinople, the Varangian Guard was a mercenary unit feared for its mercilessness. The Varangians' main duty was to protect the emperor, but could be unleashed at critical points in battle, to the horror of their foes.

Harold Hardrada was a Varangian Guard before becoming King of Norway

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X1

EQUIPPING A VIKING

The fighting gear that Viking warriors made sure they loaded onto the longship

HELMET
According to the handful of helmets discovered, Vikings wore simple bowl-shaped headgear (and not horned). It required a heavy blow to pierce, but may have been unwieldy, or expensive, for many warriors.

SHIELD
Shields were round and made of wood, with metal reinforcements around the rim and in the centre to protect the grip. Shields were placed along the edges of longships either as decoration or defence.

WEAPONS
Spears up to three metres long and axes were common weapons, while swords would be far more precious and so a true symbol of a Viking warrior. Expensive and difficult to make, swords would become family heirlooms.

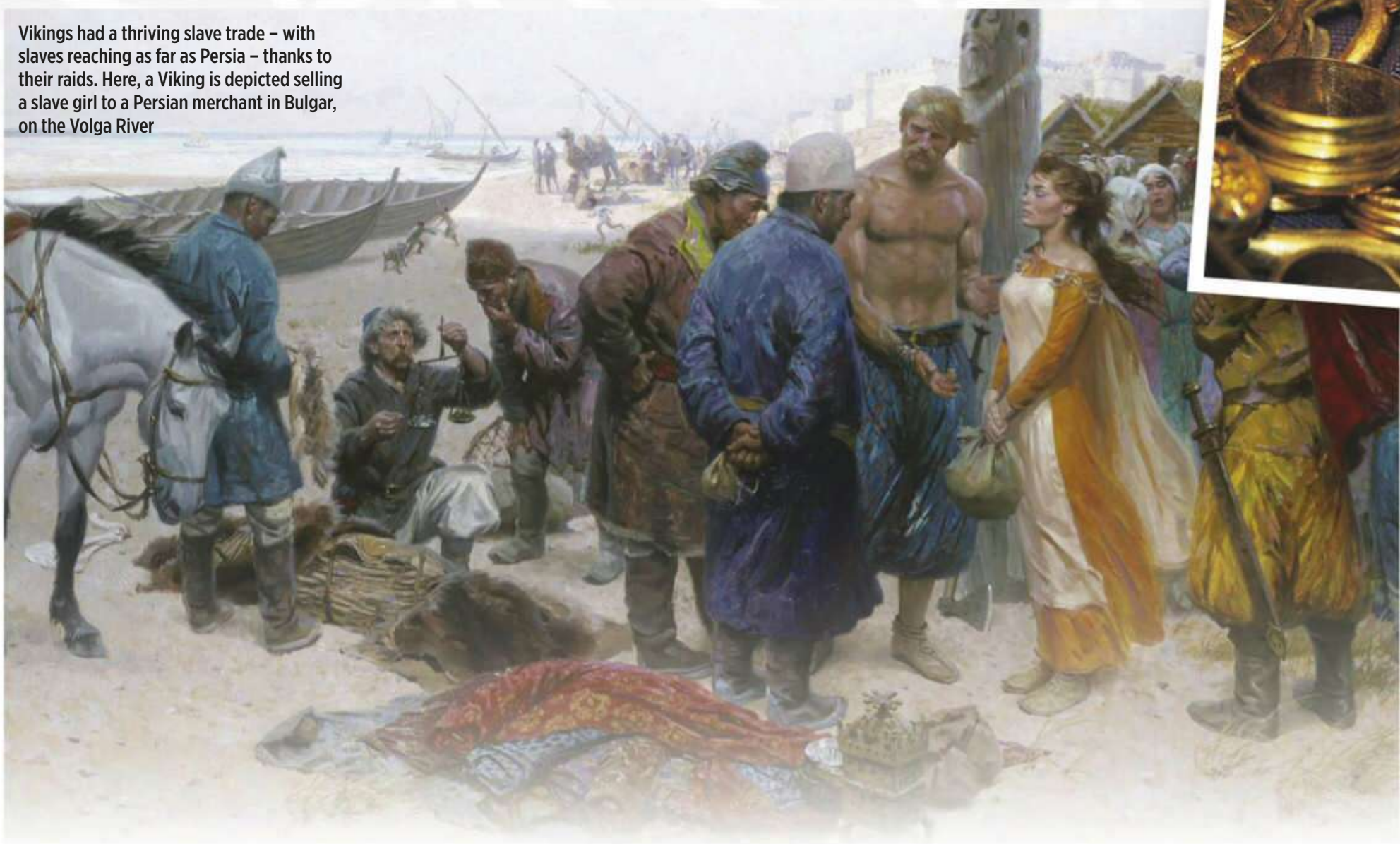
ARMOUR
Most warriors wore leather padding to absorb enemy blows. Only the wealthiest could afford chainmail.

BOOTS
Offering little, if any, protection, simple leather boots were all the Vikings would wear on their feet.

DID YOU KNOW?

FIT FOR A KING

Harald Hardrada, King of Norway and contestant for the throne of England, had a chainmail coat so long that it resembled a skirt, called 'Emma'. According to the sagas, he was not wearing Emma when he was killed.



Vikings had a thriving slave trade – with slaves reaching as far as Persia – thanks to their raids. Here, a Viking is depicted selling a slave girl to a Persian merchant in Bulgar, on the Volga River

HOW THE VIKINGS LIVED

Viking society had a hierarchy, laws and means of seeking justice… so not as lawless as their reputation suggests

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

Despite their fearsome reputation, the Vikings did not spend the entire year raiding and invading. In fact, only in summer did the call of the sea, and the treasures that awaited, lure them away from home. Most of the year revolved around fishing, farming and tending to the land.

Society was split into three classes: at the top was the nobility – the *jarls*, who were wealthy in property, treasure and had a loyal group of followers. They acted as local chieftains, but the more powerful among them could become a king. The vast majority of Vikings belonged to the next class, the *karls* – freemen and land owners who worked as fishermen, farmers, merchants, craftsmen and warriors. If a karl grew successful or wealthy enough, they could achieve jarl status. But they could also lose everything and end up at the bottom of society as a slave – a class known as *thralls*.

While many thralls had been captured during raids, some entered slavery voluntarily as a way of paying off a debt. If a thrall managed to accumulate property or wealth, they had the chance to buy back their freedom or could be freed by their masters. Until then, thralls worked on farms and ships, or made for a valuable trading commodity it has been suggested that as much as 10 per cent of the population of Scandinavia were slaves. As Viking raids overseas increased, so too did the number of captives taken. Some of these men and women were then sold on elsewhere in Europe, or even as far as the Middle East and North Africa.

The Vikings shared similarities with other Germanic societies, notably in that a Viking leader was a male who had established a reputation as a warrior. Yet all freemen had the right to be heard and participated in local assemblies known as *things*, where political decisions, laws and punishments would be discussed and decided. As historian Philip Parker points out, though, such gatherings often saw powerful families leading the proceedings. “It doesn’t take too long for certain families to believe that they have a right to rule and that leaders should

Iceland’s parliament, the Althing, is the oldest in the world and was first held by the Vikings in around AD 930 in a scene similar to this

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X5

ABOVE: **Coins from the Cuerdale hoard found in 1840 in Lancashire, one of the largest Viking hoards ever discovered**

TOP: **The Vikings were master craftsmen and created beautiful brooches, buckles and other jewellery**

be chosen from among them. That's the origin of royal dynasties."

LAW-ABIDERS

The Vikings may have a reputation for being lawless when it came to the invasion of other countries, but Norse society itself was governed by strict laws. Fines were usually the main form of punishment. An amount of compensation, known as *wergild* (man price) could be paid to an injured party (or their family in case of death), and fines could also be issued for crimes such as theft or killing someone else's thrall.

In many cases, more serious crimes like murder could see a Viking outlawed and ostracised from the community such a punishment saw the condemned relinquish any protections they had under law, and meant it was lawful for someone to kill them.

When it came to questioning or insulting someone's honour, a fine was not enough. A duel, known as a *holmgang*, was used to settle arguments over land, debt and honour. These took place within a few days of their announcement, with the weapons and rules agreed beforehand. The two men fought on an animal hide or skin cloak; if one of them stepped off, they forfeited the holmgang. Combatants would then fight until first blood had been drawn, or death depending on what had been agreed.

LIFE AND LEISURE

Where did a Viking call home, and what did they do for fun?

THE LONGHOUSE

▶ Vikings lived in long, narrow buildings made from whatever materials were available, generally wood, stone or turf as they kept out the cold, and covered with a thatched or earth roof – a layer of small tree branches laid over the main support rafter and then covered with layers of turf and birch bark. Longhouses resembled the hull of an upturned ship and tended to be between five and seven metres wide, but could be anywhere between 15 to 75 metres long. Many homes would be simple, with a central hearth for heating, cooking and gathering around in the evenings, and just one large room where the family ate and slept. There were no windows, so the only light would come from hanging lamps or the open door and smoke holes in the roof. The chieftain of the village was likely to have a large hall to show off his wealth and status.

A longhouse reconstruction at L'Anse aux Meadows archaeological site in Newfoundland

L'Anse aux Meadows is the only place in North America confirmed to have been a Norse site

The rules of Hnefatafl have been lost, but modern versions have been made, similar to chess

GAMES AND PASTIMES

◀ Aside from raiding, trading and exploring, Vikings enjoyed all manner of leisure pursuits, including feasting and music – activities that went hand-in-hand at gatherings. Another favourite pastime was drinking – and drinking games. Determining who could out-drink their opponent would often form the evening's entertainment, as would seeing who could tell the most articulate story whilst under the influence. The Vikings had a love of board games, too, including Hnefatafl. The rules are unclear, but it seems to have been a game of strategy with one player beginning with an advantage. Boards and game pieces made of amber, ivory and antler have been found at burial sites across Scandinavia and Britain. Competitive sports were also popular among them wrestling, tug-of-war and ball games.

Battle was a way of life for Vikings and women played their part – but maybe not in the fighting

WOMEN IN THE VIKING WORLD

Dr Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir addresses the roles, rights and reputations of women in the Viking Age

INTERVIEW BY DAVID MUSGROVE

When you think of the Viking Age, it is difficult not to see it as anything but a patriarchal society, where men ruled by the sword and axe. Yet Viking women had more options and agency than you might expect...

Q: Is it fair to say that the Viking world was a man's world?

A: I don't think it is, no. The popular cliché is that the Viking world was masculine, but if you take women completely out of the narrative then you lose a vital aspect. Women were there, in the communities, participating in politics, being entrepreneurs, and carrying out all kinds of jobs like making the huge sails that enabled the Vikings to sail across the sea to new lands.

Women were also instilling the sort of values into their children that would help them grow up to become proper Viking men. So, we really need to incorporate women into some of the more popular narratives.

Q: Before Viking women married, were they free to travel and have adventures?

A: Well, I think that idea appeared in the sagas. There are all these stories about shield maidens who, before they got married, go off and have the life of a Viking, sailing around and basically act like the men (*see box, right*). The reality was probably a lot harsher as, on average, they mostly didn't have that much freedom. Young women would more or less marry the man they were

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X4

ABOVE: **Without women making the ropes and sails, Viking longboats may not have ever crossed the seas**

BELOW: **Raising children was at the centre of a married woman's life**

told to marry, and wouldn't have had much choice in the matter. Marriages were usually contracted to form alliances, and so the family would decide. I think there's quite an interesting juxtaposition between the saga stories of women flying around Scandinavia and the reality.

Q: What was marriage like for Viking women?

A: There certainly were not a whole lot of career options for women other than marriage. To get married was probably something that young women would have wanted to do, I think, as it was a way to gain a certain social status. A married woman would have a modicum of economic independence, for example. In the end, a bride-to-be would probably just hope to have a nice husband, but it was not up to them. The types of stories that do exist – like of a woman going ▶

Were shield maidens real, or embellishments of the Viking sagas?

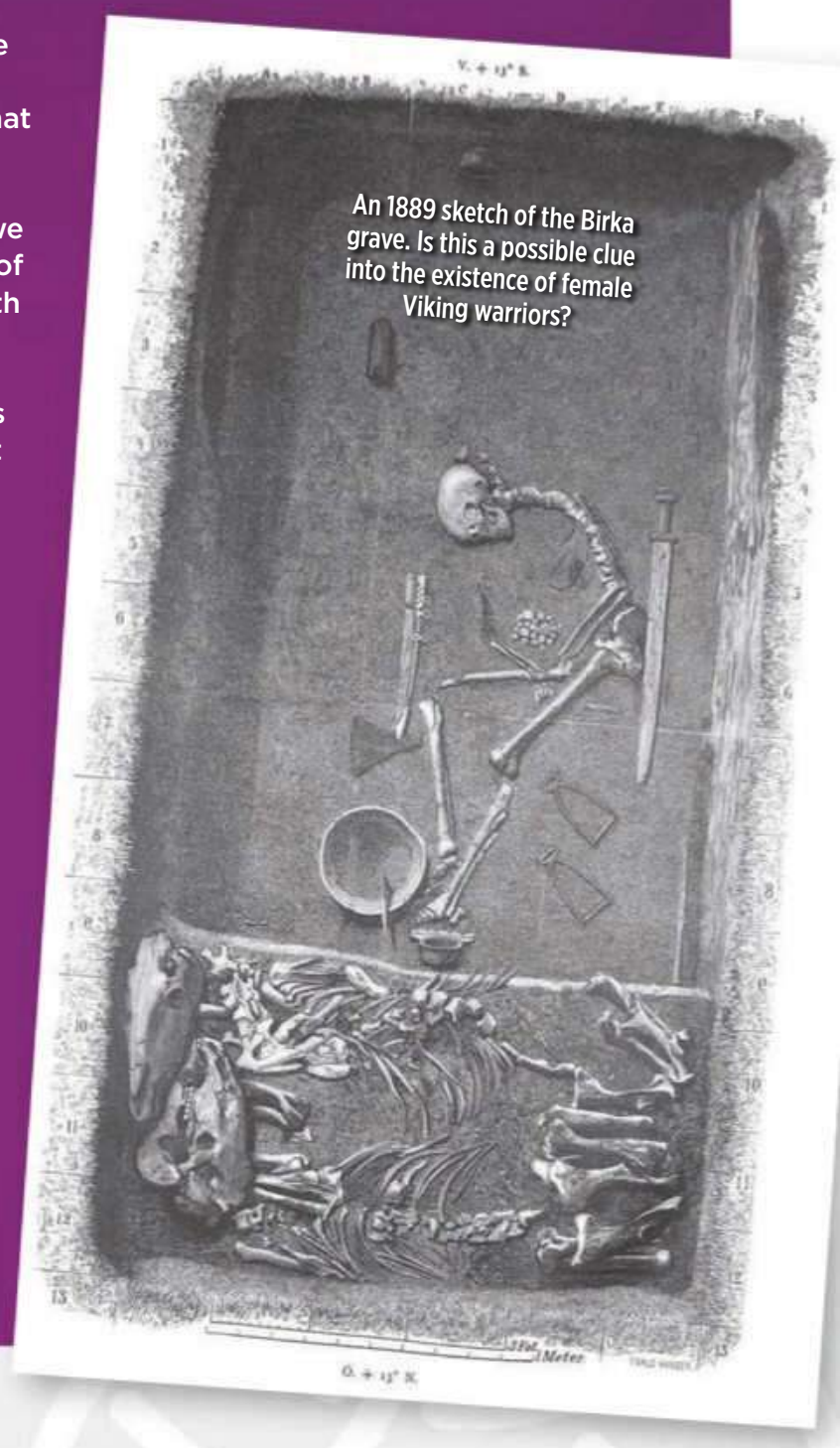
SHIELD MAIDENS: FACT OR FICTION?

Is there any evidence for female Viking warriors of the type we frequently see on our TV screens today?

"The classic interpretation of the Birka grave [a 10th-century Viking grave, excavated in 1878 in Sweden] before DNA analysis was that the remains belonged to a high-status male warrior," says Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir. "But now, after DNA study in recent years, we know that this person, buried with all kinds of weapons and tools that are gendered as both male and warrior, was a biological woman."

So was this woman a real-life shield maiden? "The bones don't have any wounds and they're not dense in the way to suggest that the person might have trained a lot for battle", contines Friðriksdóttir. "But it prompts a lot of questions about how we classify a warrior: is it just having a grave with weapons buried with the body? Does the skeleton need to have signs of having fought? We also find graves where little boys have been buried in the whole kit for a warrior and they, obviously, would not have been battle-hardened warriors at the time of their deaths. But that was the role intended for them.

"Then there are the realities of being a warrior, which meant being part of a masculine warband. Is it realistic to think that a woman would have been able to exist in this sort of space and have this sort of lifestyle? Certainly in the sagas, shield maidens exist in these more fantastical spaces. But when you get into the more realistic sagas, there's not any convincing evidence of a shield maiden fighting among the Viking armies."



An 1889 sketch of the Birka grave. Is this a possible clue into the existence of female Viking warriors?

THE SAGA OF GUDRID

Male adventurers like Erik the Red and Leif Erikson move over – it was a female Icelandic explorer who ranked among the most travelled Europeans of the 11th century

Known as the 'far traveller' and described as "a woman of striking appearance, and wise", Gudrid Thorbjarnardóttir remains a lesser-known figure in Viking exploration, yet her adventures ranged from North America to Rome.

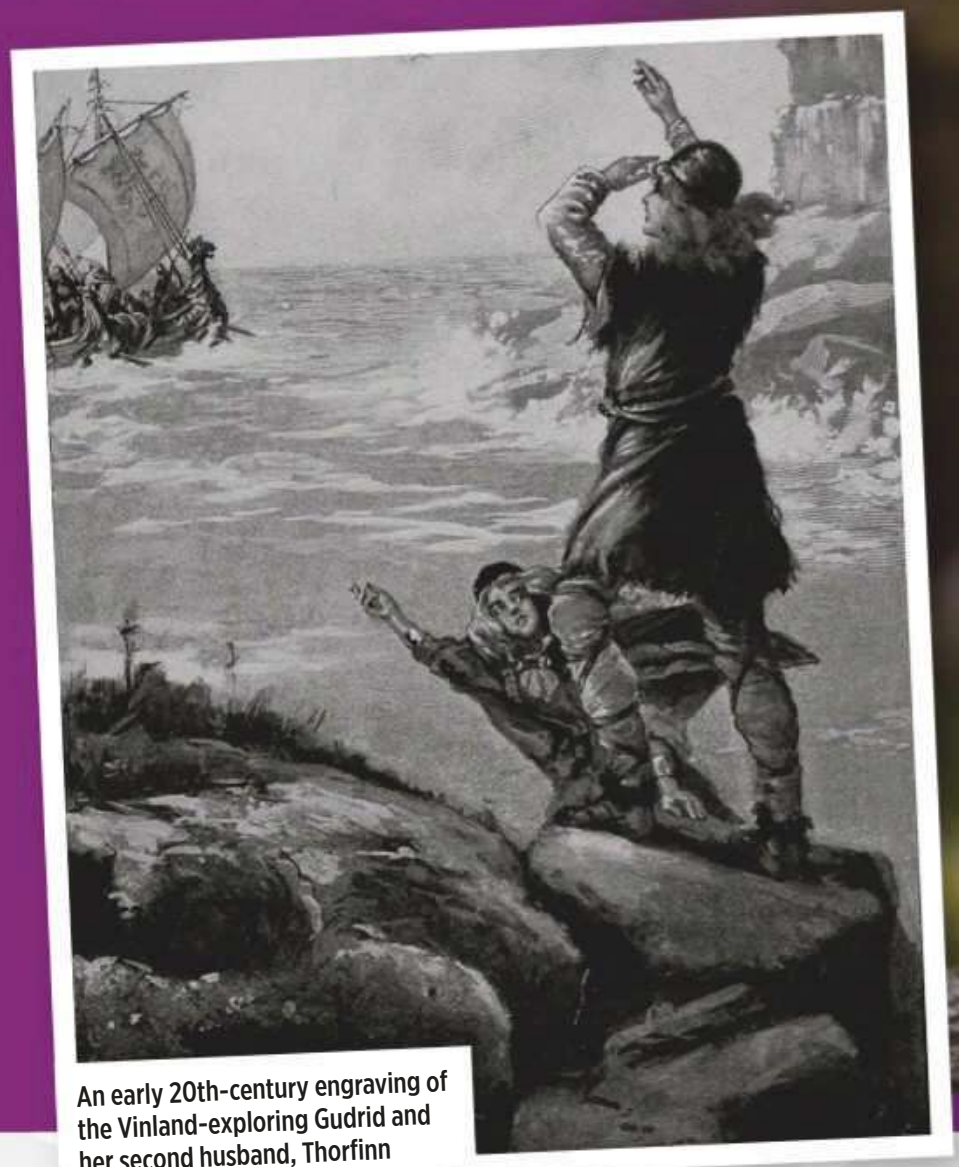
Born in late-10th-century Iceland, much of Gudrid's story comes from two Old Norse sagas written centuries afterwards – *The Saga of Erik the Red* and *The Saga of the Greenlanders*, the so-called Vinland sagas as they chart the Viking voyages to North America. Both texts tell of how Gudrid joined her father Thorbjorn on a journey west from Iceland to the new colony in Greenland, a passage fraught with danger as, according to *The Saga of the Greenlanders*, they were shipwrecked and had to be rescued by Leif Erikson.

In Greenland, Gudrid married Leif's brother, Thorstein, son of Erik the Red, but their relationship did not last long as he succumbed to sickness during a tough winter. According to *The Saga of the Greenlanders*, Thorstein rose from the dead to tell Gudrid of her long future, filled with many descendents.

Gudrid married again, this time an Icelander named Thorfinn Karlsefni, and together they led an expedition to North America, which the Vikings called Vinland. During their several years there, it is said that Gudrid gave birth to a son, Snorri – if true, he would be the first known baby born to a European in North America.

In *The Saga of Erik the Red*, Gudrid epitomises the transition from the Norse pagan religion to Christianity and is described as a "Christian woman". In her later years, she continued to travel and even made a pilgrimage to Rome, before returning to Iceland and living as a nun. To many, Gudrid is the true hero of the Vinland sagas and an ancestor to a long line of Icelanders.

A statue of Gudrid and her son Snorri stands at her birthplace in Iceland



An early 20th-century engraving of the Vinland-exploring Gudrid and her second husband, Thorfinn

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ABOVE: **A 10th-century tapestry fragment**

TOP: **A married woman would make clothes for her household, spinning wool and woven on upright looms, or create tapestries**

Viking women certainly lived in a man's world, but they had more rights and freedoms than a lot of women in Europe

DID YOU KNOW?

STAYING SHIPSHAPE

While a Viking woman in her forties would have been considered old in this era, the two women discovered in the famous Oseberg Ship burial were thought to have been over 50 and 80 when they died.

◀ off to Norway to propose to a man herself – were real one-offs or not to be believed. Most of the time, the sagas depict young women when they are 14 or 15 years old, and their father often just announces that it is time for them to marry – and they do.

Q: Once they were married, did Viking women have more authority and independence, and would their status in society have improved?

A: Absolutely. An unmarried woman was, most of time, probably a servant. If they were lucky, they may have been living with a brother or male relative, which would improve their lot. In the sagas, at least, everyone who isn't a servant gets married.

Married women, in contrast, would have had control over their own household and were legally allowed to spend a certain amount of money without having to ask their husbands. They could have a greater say in things and involve themselves in the politics of the family.

They certainly had legal rights that they would not have had otherwise, including being allowed to inherit. Being a single woman was not a concept in the same way as we understand it.

"A MARRIED WOMAN HAD LEGAL RIGHTS THEY WOULD NOT HAVE HAD OTHERWISE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO INHERIT"

Q: On the flipside, there was divorce. Is it correct that a woman could be divorced on the spot by a man?

A: That seems to be the case, though it's difficult to say what actually happened based on sagas and laws written down later on. That said, there are so many different versions of people getting divorced in the sagas that there must have been some cases.

There is an example in Njáls saga, where an older man is at a wedding with his wife and starts, well, leching on a young girl of only 14. When his wife says something, he divorces her then and there and she was cast out of the wedding, never to be heard of again. It is difficult to say whether someone would have actually been divorced as abruptly as that, though. And don't forget, Viking women had the right to request a divorce themselves, and reclaim their dowries if their marriage ended.

Q: Could Viking women achieve financial independence, regardless of whether they were married or not, by engaging in a craft or trade?

A: Evidence suggests that Viking women were active in the textile industry – graves have been found showing women being buried with tools of the trade – but we don't know for sure whether those women were married. Probably a lot of married women were running cottage industries on the side, as well as having some control over their household.

I have a theory that if a woman was able to move away from a rural area and into a town, they could perhaps be a little more anonymous and get away from an interfering family. This could open up the possibility of them achieving a certain success with a trade, which would have given them more of a chance of being autonomous and independent.

HistoryExtra Podcast

Listen to the full interview with Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir at *historyextra.com/viking-women*

GODS, MYTHS, BELIEFS AND RITUALS

The Vikings were pagan, polytheistic and had a plethora of ways to worship, as far as can be told

WORDS: JONNY WILKES

There was no single, organised and institutional religion of the Vikings. As they did not comprise a distinct social entity to begin with, it stands to reason they would not have a distinct set of beliefs and practices. The paganism seen in the Viking Age varied from region to region, so what people believed in Denmark would be different to Norway and Sweden. Each community, each family even, practiced their beliefs in their own way.

How they did so is a far trickier question to answer. Beliefs and rituals were vital to the Vikings and infused into everyday life, but very little evidence survives to suggest how this would have looked other than what can be gleaned from burials and carved figures. The sagas and narratives that provide the bulk of our understanding (about Odin, Thor, Valhalla, Ragnarok etc) come from centuries later, and were written by Christians no less.

Thor, in Hymir's boat, battles the Midgard Serpent in this 18th-century painting by Johann Heinrich Füssli

DID YOU KNOW?

VAST VALHALLA

According to the poems and prose about Viking mythology, Valhalla, the magnificent hall for Viking warriors who died in battle, was roofed with golden shields, with spears for rafters; it was so large that it needed 540 doors.

This stone is engraved with the representation of the gods Odin, Thor and Freyr at the bottom

SACRIFICE AND REWARD

The Vikings had no religious texts – as everything spread through oral tradition – and few temple-like buildings. Instead, natural features such as groves and rivers were deemed sacred and used for rituals. Chieftains and rulers mostly took charge of religious rituals and ceremonies, but evidence suggests that *völur* or seeresses also existed (women with magical and prophetic power), as well as Godar (heathen priests who functioned as cult leaders). It would have been priests who most likely carried out the major Viking ritual: sacrifice. Although, anyone could offer objects or sacrifice animals to the gods, and it seemed the Vikings were not opposed to human sacrifices, too, at certain ceremonies, such as funerals.

The Vikings had a whole pantheon of gods and goddesses who affected every part of their lives, and each requiring their own sacrifices. Women looked to Freya, for instance, for help with pregnancy or childbirth, while Thor, the hammer-wielding god of thunder, received sacrifices for good weather. Again, the importance of an individual god varied depended on where they were being worshipped.

And it was not only gods the Vikings believed in, but also Frost and Fire Giants and a menagerie of monsters and beasts, including the wolf Fenrir and Jörmungandr, a serpent so large that it encircled the realm of humans. That realm was called Midgard. The gods resided in Asgard, the giants in ▶

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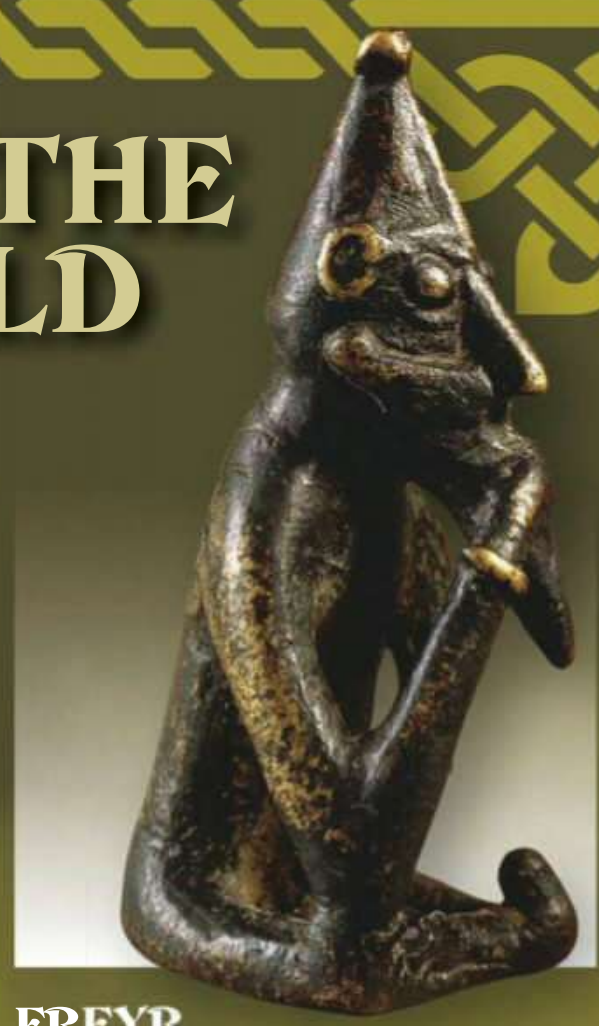
TOP GODS OF THE VIKING WORLD (AND ASGARD)

THOR

God of thunder, lightning and storms, Thor was perhaps the most popular of the pantheon as he protected humankind and Asgard. The red-bearded son of Odin boasted such strength that he could fight giants – armed with his iron gloves, enchanted belt and, most famously, his great hammer, Mjollnir, which could level mountains. His hammer became a ubiquitous symbol in Viking art and culture. It was from his name that we get 'Thursday' ('Thor's Day').

FREYJA

Goddess associated with love, sex, beauty, gold and magic, Freyja – the sister of Freyr – was pleasure-seeking and materialistic. She owned the beautiful necklace Brísingamen and a cloak of falcon feathers that let her fly. One of the few female deities in the Viking pantheon, her name means 'Lady'. While half of the warriors slain in battle were selected by the Valkyries to join Odin in Valhalla, the other half went to the field presided over by Freyja, named *Fólkvangr*.



FREYR

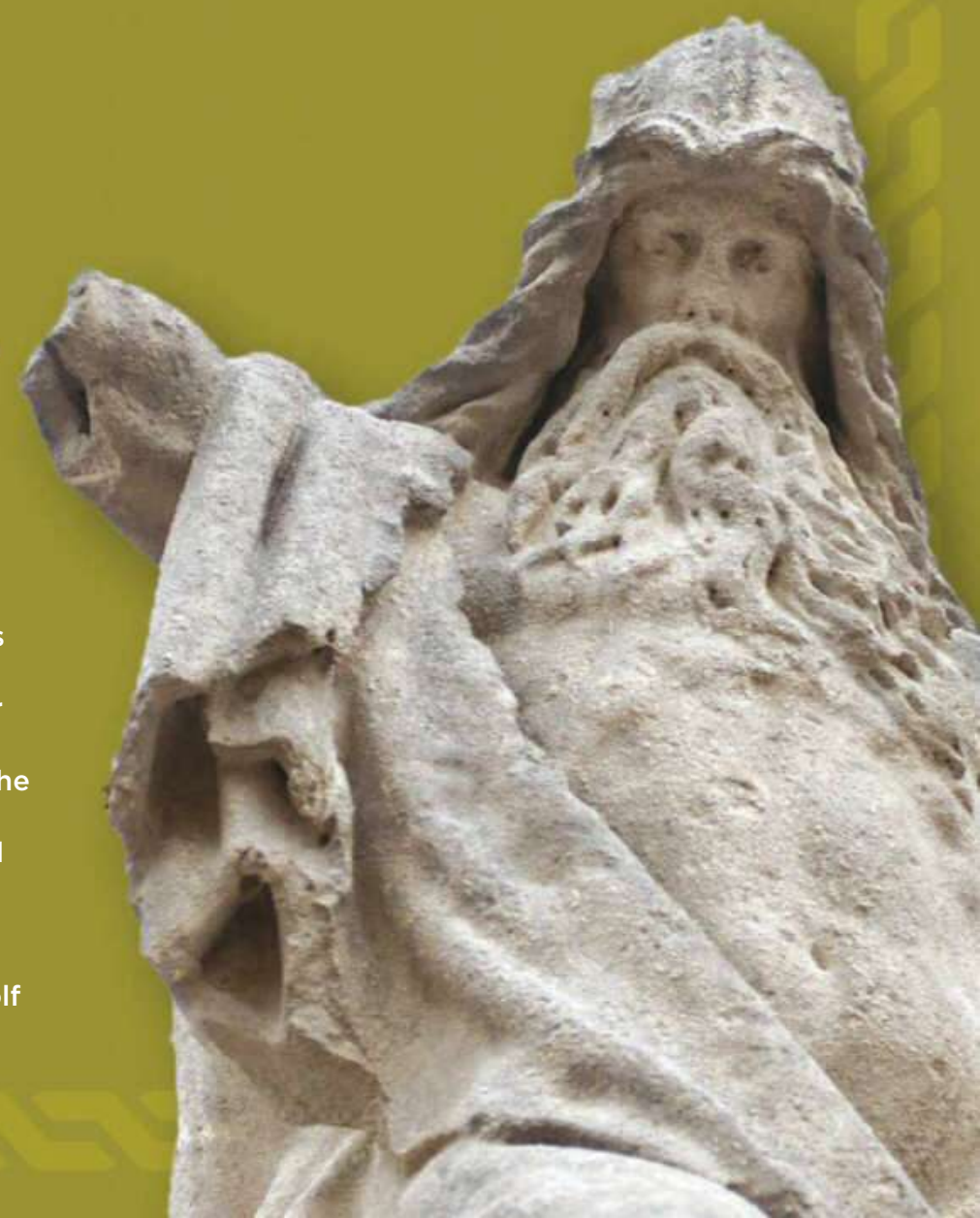
God of fertility, but also associated with sunshine, prosperity and peace, Freyr, as son of the sea god Njörd, belonged to the Vanir – one of the two warring races of gods, the other being the Æsir. One of the most venerated of the gods, especially in Sweden, he would receive offerings for a good harvest or virility. According to the mythology, Freyr owned a ship he could fold into his pocket and a sword that battled on its own, and he rode a golden boar made by the dwarves.

LOKI

The trickster, a god associated with mischief (and also fire), Loki was a shapeshifter, able to take on the forms of animals and people. But Loki could also be cruel with his pranks – leading to the death of a beloved god. Loki tricked Freya, mother to Balder, into revealing her son's only weakness, mistletoe, and then had the blind god Höd throw a sharpened branch of mistletoe at him. At Ragnarok, Loki sides with the giants, but is slain in the battle.

ODIN

The All-Father and ruler of Asgard, Odin was linked with war, wisdom, magic and poetry, among other things. Such was his desire for knowledge that he sacrificed one of his eyes for perception of the world and cosmos, and let himself be hanged on the world tree, Yggdrasil, for nine days and nights to gain understanding of the runes. The one-eyed Odin (or Woden, which is where 'Wednesday' comes from) was often depicted in a broad-brimmed hat or cloak so he would not be recognised as he walked the human realm. He rode an eight-legged horse named Sleipnir and owned two ravens that spied for him. Odin would meet his end fighting the monstrous wolf Fenrir at Ragnarok.



ABOVE LEFT: **The *Prose Edda*, a collection of Old Norse poems, tells us much about Viking mythology**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The entrance of the gods into Valhalla, from an illustration for *Das Rheingold*, by Richard Wagner**

Jotunheim, while Niflheim was the cold, dark and misty world of the dead. There were nine realms in total, connected by the branches and roots of Yggdrasill, a sacred ash tree at the centre of the cosmos.

The place all good Viking warriors wanted to go, though, was Valhalla, a magnificent hall in Asgard for those who died in battle. There, it was believed, they would spend their days honing their combat skills and, wounds magically healed, their nights drinking the finest mead and feasting on the meat of an eternal boar. The god Odin welcomed these warriors, as they would fight for him at Ragnarok – the pre-ordained end of the worlds, when the Sun will darken, the stars vanish, the Earth sink into the sea, and a great battle will take place between the gods, giants and beasts.

"THE CLASH OF PAGAN BELIEFS WITH CHRISTIANITY FOREVER CHANGED RELIGION FOR THE VIKINGS"

So, with so little evidence, how do we know about this Viking mythology? On top of a number of sagas, the chief text to provide a systematic explanation was *Prose Edda* by Icelander Snorri Sturluson. It comprehensively covered the mythology from before creation to Ragnarok. Written in the 13th century, long after the Vikings were at their height – and so after Scandinavia converted to Christianity, indeed Snorri himself was a Christian – it offers fascinating insights but should not be taken as gospel, according to historian Philip Parker: "We can't be absolutely sure it hasn't been overlain with judicious reinvention or influenced by Christian theology to some extent."

The clash of their pagan beliefs with Christianity would forever change the concept of religion for the Vikings. While seen as heathen and barbaric by the Christians, the Vikings' decisions to target places like churches and monasteries were not motivated by religion, but by knowing where the undefended treasures were being kept. In fact, before the gradual move towards conversion, they quickly came to see the benefits of Christianity, according to Parker. "Sometimes they had a kind of token conversion, called *primsigning* or 'first signing', where they had the sign of the cross made on them. It made them acceptable to engage in trading."

SHIP BURIALS

As the sea played a huge role in the lives of the Vikings, so it did in death as well

Due to their beliefs in the afterlife, Vikings were buried with all that they might need for their journey into the underworld. Craftsmen might be buried with their tools and warriors their weapons. We have little written evidence for their burial rituals, but Arab writer Ahmad Ibn Fadlan is one of the few people to have witnessed a 10th-century Viking burial. His account stated that the ritual included human sacrifice and torture.

For kings and the nobility, a ship burial was the most common form and evidence of these have been found across Scandinavia, Britain and Russia. The dead were laid out in a ship with their possessions, and either sent out to sea and set alight or buried under a mound. Burial mounds also served a dual purpose as markers of dynastic territories.

The best-preserved ship burial to date was found in Norway and is known as the Oseberg ship. The find uncovered a complete longship, the remains of two women as well as horses, clothing, a cart and chests of goods.

RIGHT: **The Oseberg ship from around AD 820 is one of the most well-preserved Viking ships ever found**

BELOW: **A modern-day reenactment of a Viking ship burial**

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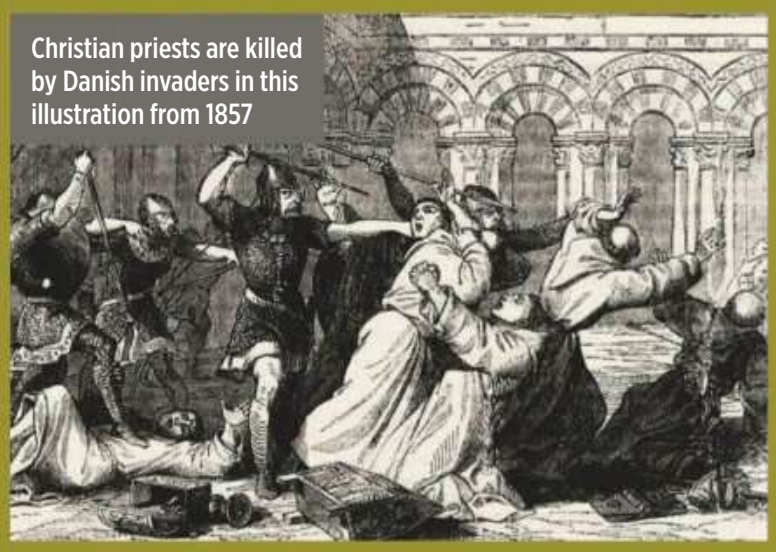
HAMMER AND CROSS

The Vikings began by killing Christians; then they joined them

With the Vikings raiding and exploring other lands, they came ever more into contact with Christianity. At first, they showed a willingness to take on the trappings of this religion to help with their trading – what's one more god to their pantheon anyway? – but as assimilation increased and generations passed, many Vikings converted. Often, pagan beliefs could be incorporated, so that Ragnarok and Judgement Day merged. Coins found in York, for example show the name of St Peter alongside Thor's hammer.

As for Scandinavia itself, politics helped Christianity take hold. "There were missionaries early in the ninth century, but they don't make much headway at all," says Philip Parker. Instead, rulers started converting – such as Harald Bluetooth of Denmark in around AD 960 – for political expediency or to foster good relations with Christian nations. By the mid-11th century, Christianity had been established in Denmark and most of Norway, thanks to King Olaf Tryggvason.

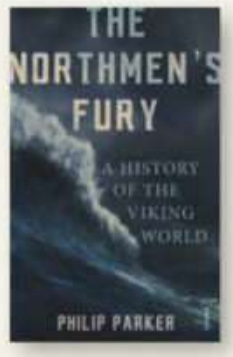


Christian priests are killed by Danish invaders in this illustration from 1857

GET HOOKED

If we've whetted your appetite for all things Viking, you can explore them further with our pick of books, TV shows and documentaries

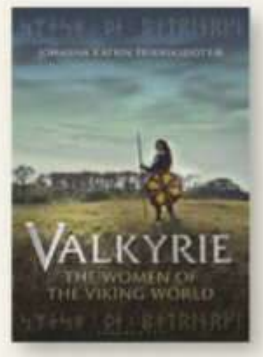
BOOKS



The Northman's Fury: a History of the Viking World

By Philip Parker (Vintage, 2015)

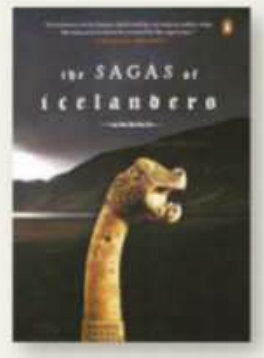
Philip Parker's sweeping overview of the Vikings examines how the Northmen made themselves felt everywhere their longships took them – and how, despite a reputation of violence, theirs was a culture of beauty, literature and endurance.



Valkyrie: the Women of the Viking World

By Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (Bloomsbury, 2020)

The Vikings are stereotypically portrayed as bearded, bloodthirsty men – so where does that leave the women of the Viking World? Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir explores the roles of women in Viking society, and how their lives were more dynamic and diverse than we might think.



The Sagas of the Icelanders

Preface by Jane Smiley (Penguin, 2005)

The sagas are epic yarns of the Viking world, and this collection of Icelandic sagas (also known as 'family sagas') serves as a wonderful introduction. It includes the fantastic Egil's Saga (a 150-year romp) and the Vinland sagas, which offer glimpses into the Norse voyages to North America.

ONLINE AND AUDIO

▶ **The Volga Vikings** *(BBC Sounds):* Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the legacy of the Vikings who headed east – crossing the Baltic and settling in modern-day Russia and the Ukraine. Listen at *bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b00vrx8g*

History Extra

▶ **For podcasts, features, quizzes, interviews and more on the Vikings, visit the Viking hub on our website: *historyextra.com/period/viking***

WATCH

Vikings

(History Channel, streaming on Amazon Prime)

Fantastical, mystical and slightly soapy, *Vikings* follows the exploits of the mythical saga hero Ragnar Lothbrok and his sons. Season 6 part 2 will air this autumn.

The Last Kingdom

(Netflix)

Based on Bernard Cornwell's novel series of the same name, *The Last Kingdom* charts the struggle between Saxons and Danes in 9th-century England through the lens of the ever-conflicted Uhtred of Bebbanburg.

Mussolini salutes the statue of Roman emperor Nerva, in the 1930s

“Mussolini had an imposing presence, with a powerful physique and almost hypnotic oratorical style – an effective blend of charismatic and callous”

ABOVE: **Now dictator, Mussolini addresses a huge crowd in 1936**

RIGHT: **Mussolini found an ally in Hitler, though theirs would never be an equal partnership**

HOW BENITO MUSSOLINI BECAME THE FIRST FACE OF FASCISM

A decade before Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, Mussolini became 20th-century Europe's first fascist dictator – but, writes **Jonny Wilkes**, his new 'Roman Empire' was in ruins before the end of WWII

Alongside Adolf Hitler, the name of Benito Mussolini is inextricably linked with the rise of fascism in 20th-century Europe. But in his youth, Mussolini was an ardent socialist. Even his name had left-wing connotations: born on 29 July 1883 in the Italian town of Predappio, his parents christened him Benito, after a liberal Mexican president, and gave him two middle names, Amilcare and Andrea, in homage to two Italian socialists. Following an unruly childhood – he was kicked out of two schools for attacking students with a penknife – Mussolini spent time in Switzerland writing for socialist newspapers and even going to prison for the cause.

His socialism crumbled, however, in the face of World War I. By 1914, Mussolini had become a leading left-wing figure in Italy, and as editor of the socialist newspaper *Avanti!* (*Forward!*), he oversaw a huge increase in the paper's circulation. Mussolini had initially argued vociferously against Italy's involvement in the war, but a sudden change of heart caused consternation among his fellow socialists, who called for his expulsion from the party. Committing to a different kind of politics, Mussolini formed his own right-wing newspaper and served in the trenches with the *Bersaglieri*, the sharpshooters, until he was wounded. He returned home a fledgling fascist, and in 1919 set up the Fascist Party, with himself as leader.

CHARISMA AND CALLOUSNESS

In the years after World War I, Italy was in a dire state. Calls grew louder for a strong leader, and Mussolini – once more a popular journalist, and figurehead of the Italian fascists – put his name forward. He had an imposing presence, with a powerful physique and almost hypnotic oratorical style – an effective blend of charismatic and callous – which appealed to the downtrodden. He set about building support, while removing opponents with his armed and uniformed squads, known as the Blackshirts.

The fascists soon controlled swathes of the country, and Mussolini saw his opportunity to seize power. In October 1922, tens of thousands of Blackshirts marched on Rome in a show of force. King Victor Emmanuel III gave in and handed over the government to Mussolini making him, at the age of 39, the youngest prime minister in Italian history. From the beginning, he ruled as de facto dictator, driven by his belief that it was his destiny to forge a new Roman Empire, with himself as Caesar.

Mussolini cemented his dictatorship in early 1925, when the murder of one of his strongest critics, Giacomo Matteotti, led the fascist's political opponents to boycott parliament, meaning the last vestiges of dissent disappeared. On 3 January 1925, he addressed the now powerless parliament: "I, and I alone, assume the political, moral and historic responsibility for everything that has happened. Italy wants peace and quiet, work and calm. I will give these things with love if possible, and with force if necessary."

CULT OF IL DUCE

Taking the name '*Il Duce*' (The Leader), Mussolini dismantled any remaining bastions of democracy. He clamped down on free press and filled papers and cinemas with propaganda; he created a youth movement to indoctrinate the next generation; and he turned Italy into a police state with networks of spies and secret police. And Mussolini's cult of personality meant he garnered praise – both at home and abroad – for his public works.

To build an empire, though, Mussolini needed to conquer territory, so in 1935 he launched an invasion of Ethiopia, one of the few African states not under European control. The Italian military – armed with superior weaponry, including mustard gas – swiftly overwhelmed Ethiopian forces, and the capital of Addis Ababa was captured within a year.

Adolf Hitler – going against the League of Nations – supported the invasion and made it clear that he regarded Mussolini's Italy as an ally. As World War II loomed, the two fascist dictators signed the Pact of Steel to establish the Axis Powers. Mussolini even introduced anti-Jewish laws in Italy to ingratiate himself with the Führer. But Hitler would always be the dominant partner, and the war proved hugely damaging for Italy and for Mussolini. His armies suffered humiliating defeats in Greece and North Africa, but worse was still to come.

Once the Allies invaded Sicily in July 1943, the mystique of Mussolini evaporated. The Fascist Grand Council turned on him, voting him out of power, and the king ordered his arrest. There was no last stand: his supporters were nowhere to be seen, and Il Duce went down with a whimper.

Despite, two months later, being rescued from prison in a daring operation by German commandos, Mussolini's return to power amounted to nothing more than heading a puppet regime in northern Italy, now under German occupation. His second reign came to an end as the Allies advanced. Trying to flee dressed in a Luftwaffe uniform, Mussolini, along with his mistress, Claretta Petacci, was captured by partisans. On 28 April 1945 they were shot, their bodies bundled into a van to be taken to Milan and hung upside down in a public square. Italians made their opinions of Mussolini known by kicking, spitting and throwing stones at the corpses. Mussolini wished to be Caesar of his own Roman Empire, but it seems he forgot what happened to the most famous Caesar of all.

Mussolini's military quickly overpowered the forces of Ethiopia

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THE SLUMS OF NEW YORK

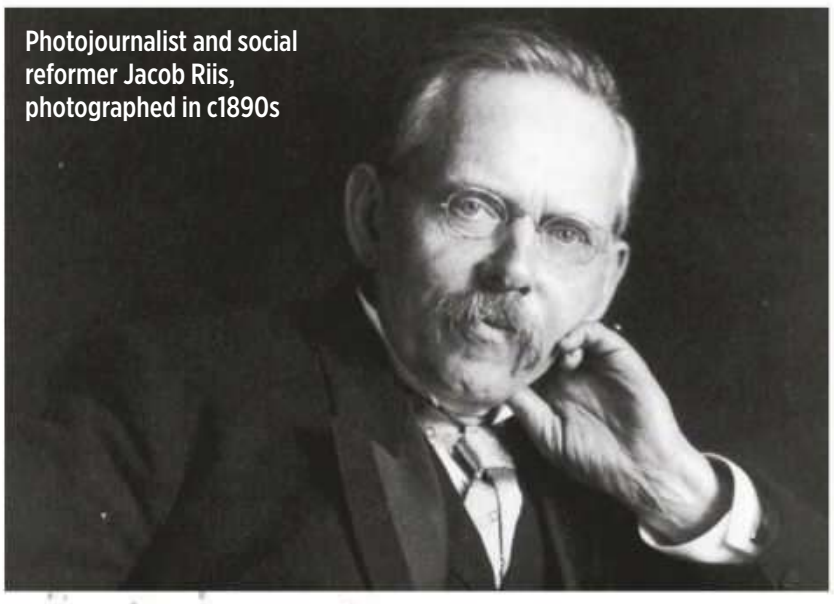
Beneath the glitz and glamour of one of America's wealthiest cities, millions of New Yorkers resided in squalor, disease and misery

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

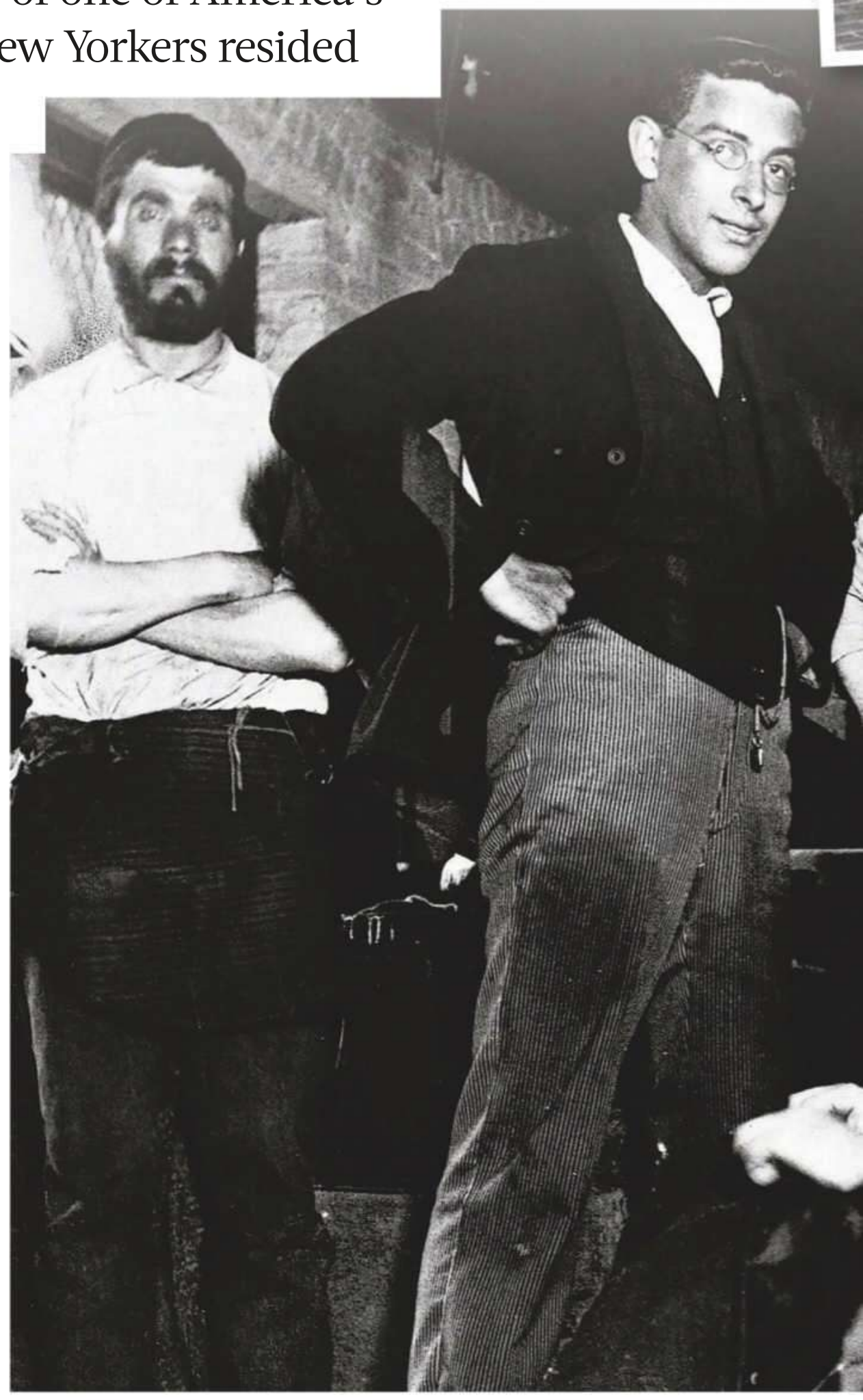
By the turn of the 20th century, New York had expanded into the bustling metropolis we know today, covering an area of 60 square miles and boasting a formidable reputation as America's largest city. In the mid 19th century, a huge influx of European immigrants saw an explosion in the city's population, which had quadrupled from 125,000 in 1820 to just under one million by 1870, making it one of the most densely populated cities on earth. New York was booming… at least for some.

Among the hundreds of thousands of immigrants arriving in New York over the course of the 19th century was 21-year-old Danish carpenter Jacob Riis, who arrived in the city in 1870. With few possessions, no money and no home, Riis lived hand-to-mouth before eventually finding employment with the *New York News Association*, beginning a career in journalism that would eventually seal his place in history.

It was as a police reporter for the *New York Tribune*, working in the city's most impoverished and crime ridden slums, that Riis chose to raise awareness of the plight of New York's poorest inhabitants. Using a newly invented flash powder, which allowed him to light up even the very darkest of rooms, Riis photographed the appalling and unsanitary conditions of the city's worst slums. In 1890, Riis published his photographs some of which you can see over the following pages in one of the first works of photojournalism, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York*. Riis' sobering images, and those of other social documentary photographers of the day, highlighted what life was truly like in the crowded, multiple dwellings – known as tenements that, by 1900, served as home for some two thirds of the city's population.



Photojournalist and social reformer Jacob Riis, photographed in c1890s



GETTY IMAGES X3

c1900: MAKING THE BEST OF IT

◀ Despite the cheery facade, flags and bicycles, these are the children of detained or waiting immigrants at Ellis Island immigration centre. This rooftop area was the only outside space in which children could play while they and their families waited – often for months.

c1889: CITY SWEATSHOP

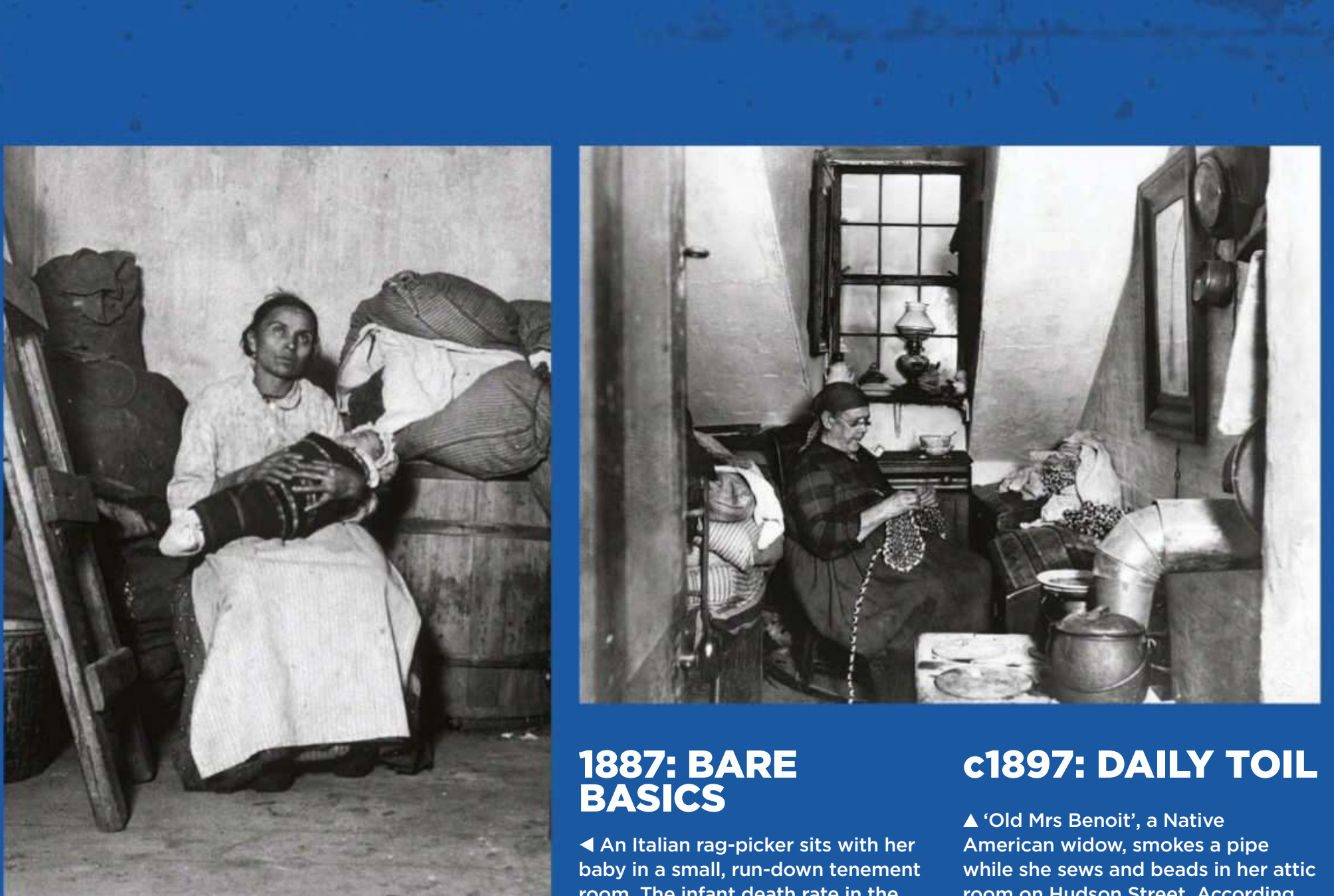
▼ A 12-year-old boy with a large bruise on his face – who, according to Riis, initially claimed to be 16 – 'pulls threads' in a New York sweatshop. Many sweatshops were based in the tenement apartment of the contractor and children were often required to contribute to a family's meagre income. Although the law limited the factory day to 10 hours, workers would often take their work home with them in the evening in a bid to earn more money through overtime.

1887: BARE BASICS

◀ An Italian rag-picker sits with her baby in a small, run-down tenement room. The infant death rate in the tenements could be as high as 1 in 10.

c1897: DAILY TOIL

▲ 'Old Mrs Benoit', a Native American widow, smokes a pipe while she sews and beads in her attic room on Hudson Street. According to Riis, she lived there for four years.

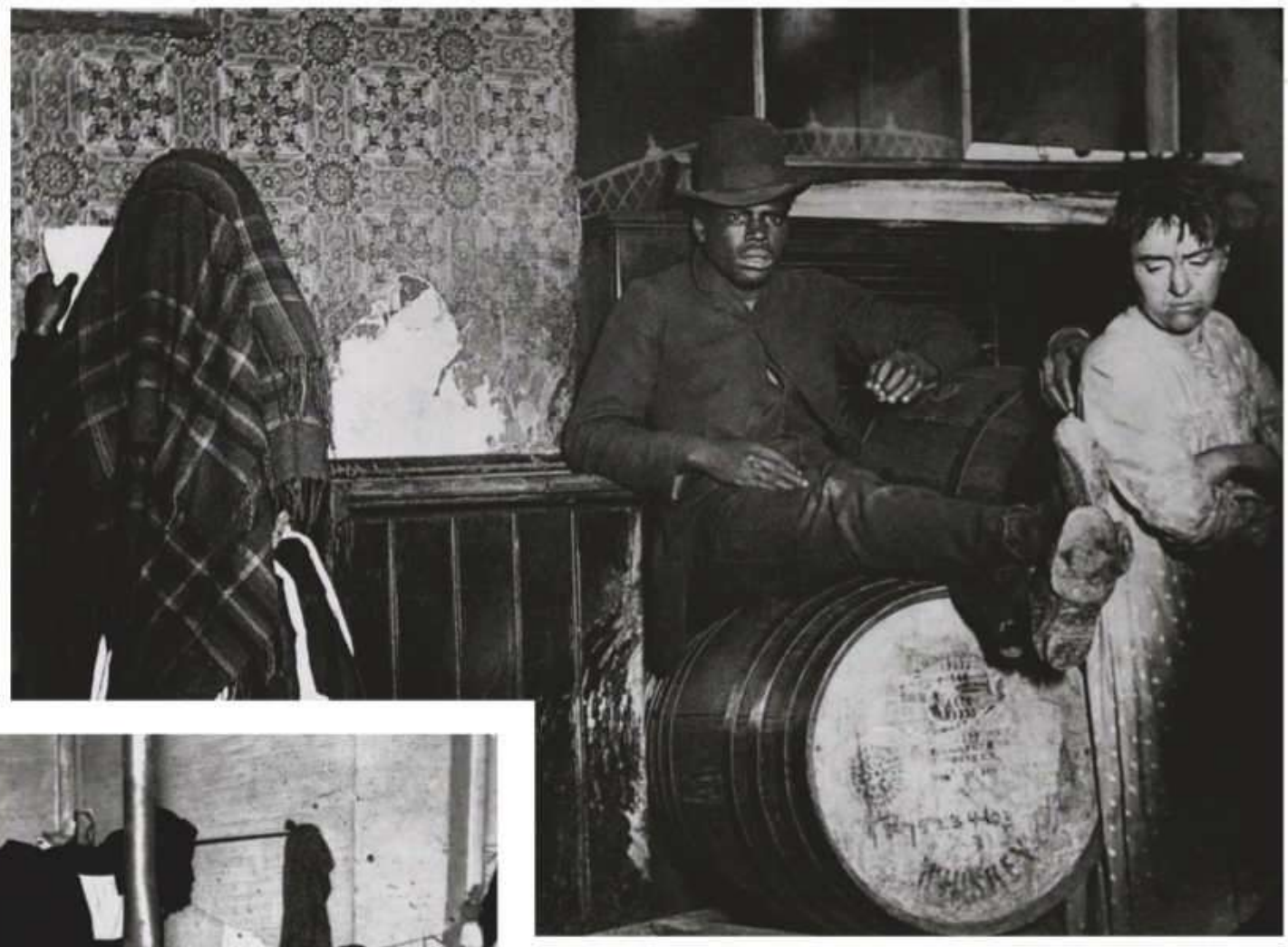


1888: BANDIT'S ROOST

▶ This alley, known as Bandit's Roost, at 59½ Mulberry Street, had a reputation for being one of the most dangerous and crime-ridden places in New York.

c1890: DOWNTIME

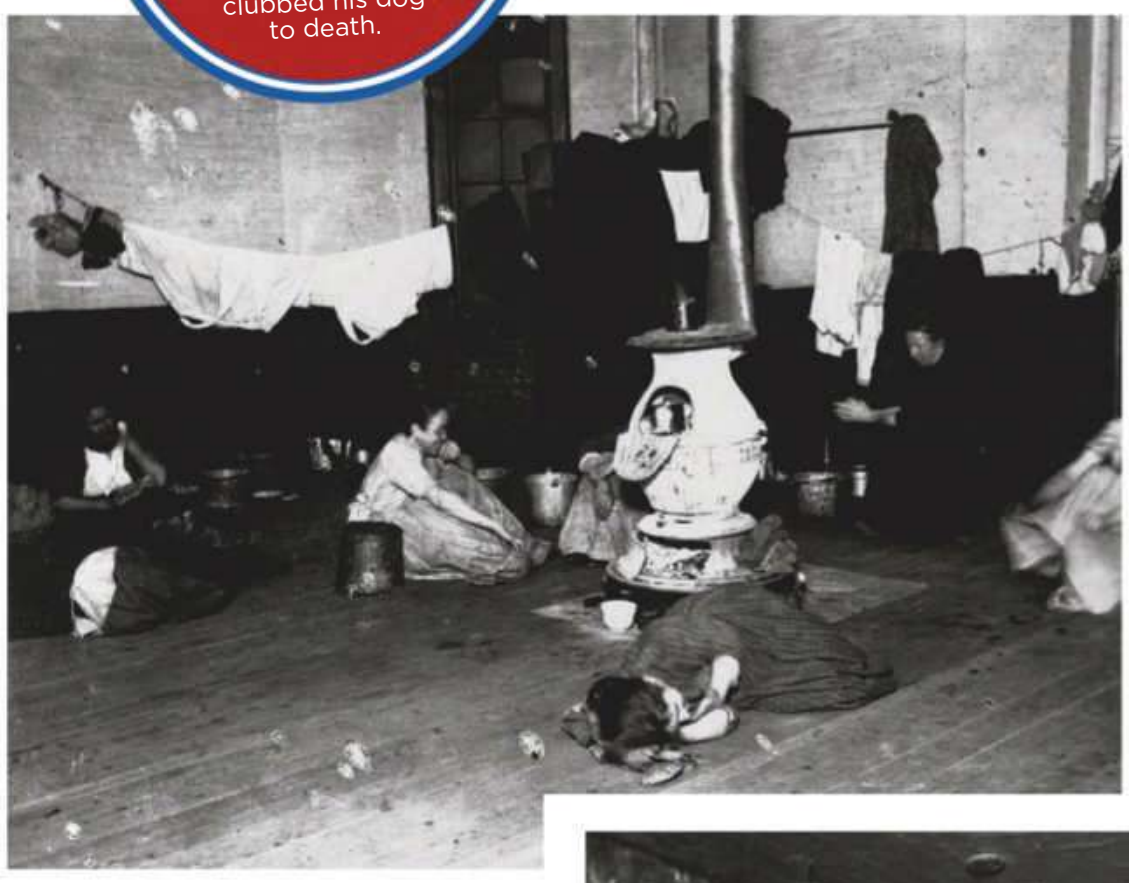
▶ An African-American man, flanked by two women, sits on a whisky keg in a so-called 'Black-and-Tan dive' on Broome Street. Against the customs of the time, this establishment allowed men and women of all races to socialise together.



DID YOU KNOW?

ROUGH NIGHT

As a homeless immigrant Riis was robbed while staying at a police lodging house. When he reported the theft, the policeman threw him out and clubbed his dog to death.

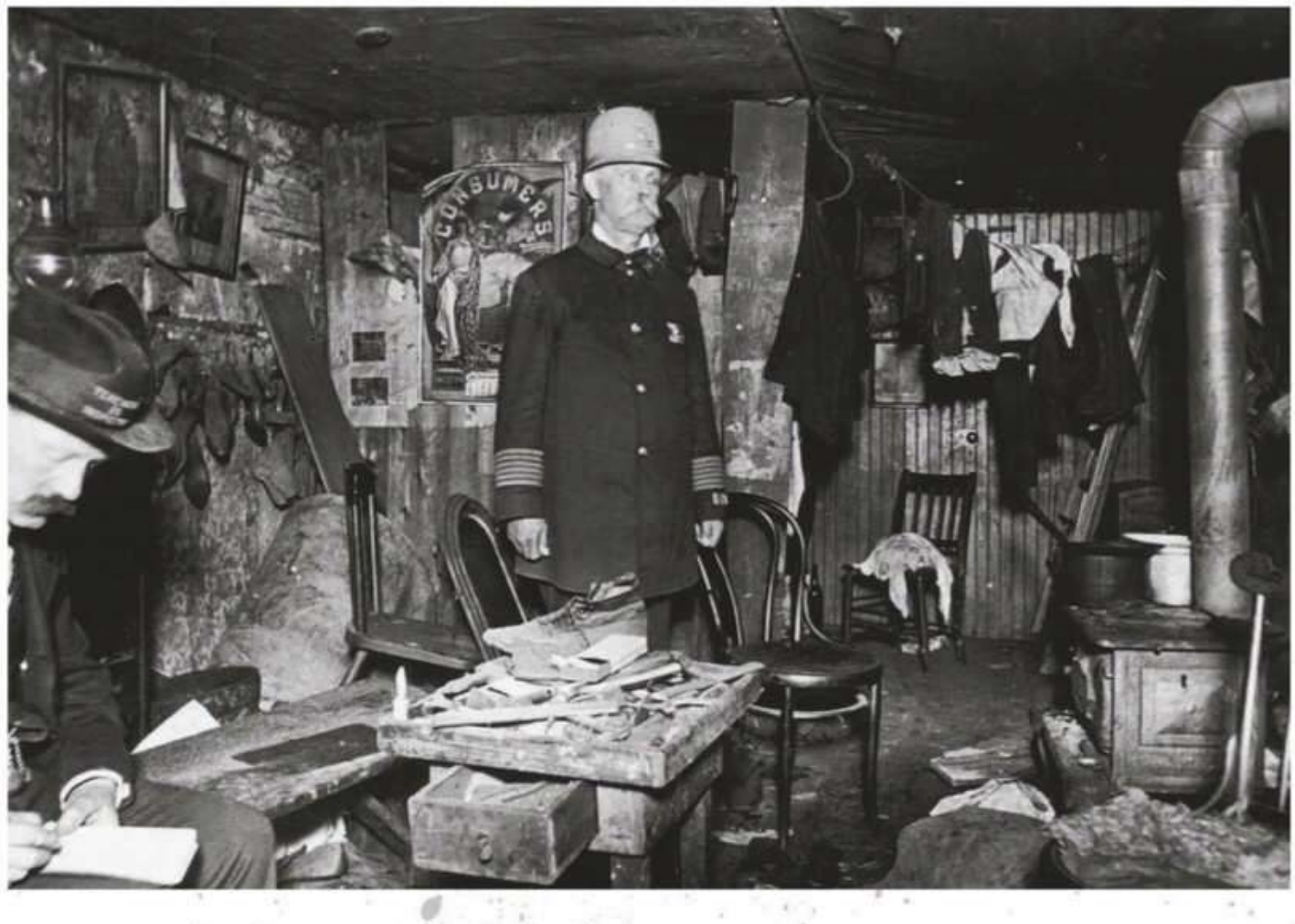


c1892: HOTBED OF CRIME?

◀ A group of women bed down for the night in a police station on West 47th Street. Police lodging houses like this one served as de facto homeless shelters for much of the 19th century. Riis condemned such locations as breeding grounds for crime and public health crises, such as outbreaks of typhus.

c1900s: UNDER INSPECTION

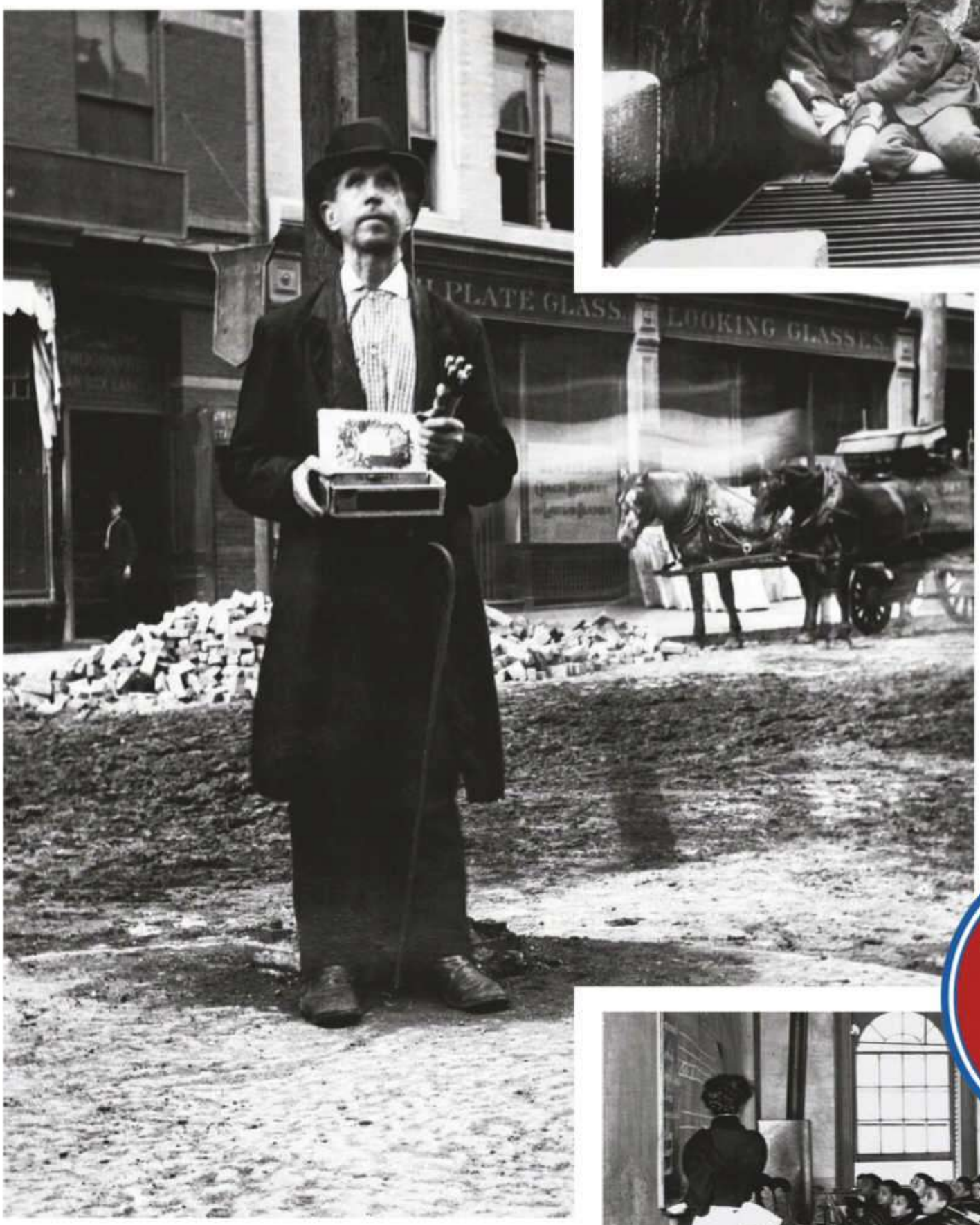
▶ In 1901, the Tenement House Act introduced a number of reforms to improve conditions in New York tenements; it was the job of officials of the New York City Tenement House Department (two of whom can be seen here, inspecting a cramped basement tenement in an image by an unknown photographer), to inspect and report on what they encountered. Despite the new act, a 1902 report recorded "vile privies... cellars full of rubbish... garbage and decomposing fecal matter... dilapidated and dangerous stairs... dangerous old fire traps without fire escapes (and) disease-breeding rags...". In its first two years, department employees made 337,246 inspections and filed 55,055 violations.



GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1 ▶

1888: EARNING A PENNY

▼ A blind man stands on a street corner, selling pencils. In his book, *How The Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis writes of Blind Man's Alley, where "dark burrows harbored a colony of blind beggars, tenants of a blind landlord, old Daniel Murphy". Murphy was eventually compelled by the Board of Health to repair and clean his squalid tenements.



1890: KEEPING OUT THE COLD

▲ Three young street children huddle together for warmth in an areaway on Mulberry Street. In the late 19th century, tens of thousands of children were forced to fend for themselves on New York's streets, supporting themselves by selling newspapers, shining shoes, and doing other odd jobs.

The lucky ones could get a hot meal, a warm bed, attend school and learn a trade at one of the shelters run by the Children's Aid Society in the 1880s. The others did what they could to survive.

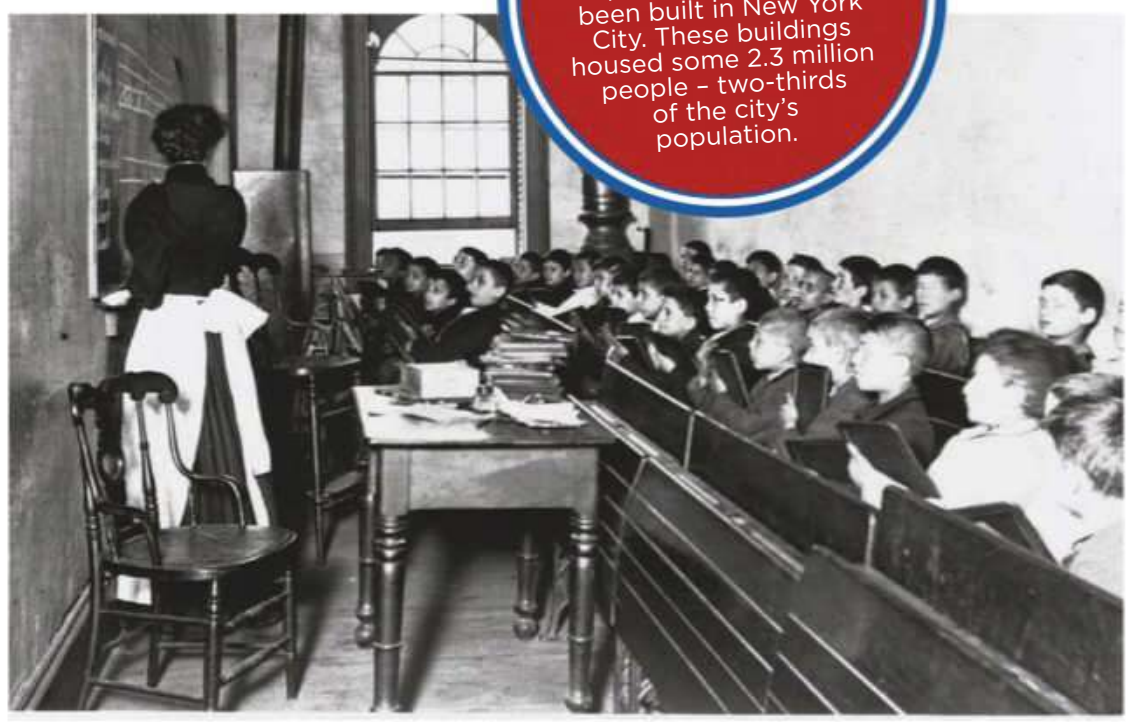
DID YOU KNOW?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

By 1900, more than 80,000 tenements had been built in New York City. These buildings housed some 2.3 million people – two-thirds of the city's population.

1888-95: SCHOOL DAYS

▶ A crowded classroom of boys in the Essex Market School on the Lower East Side. Classes at the school continued, despite the site being twice condemned by the authorities as being wholly unfit for children to be in.



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c1890: DAWN ‘TIL DUSK

◀ A Czech family make cigars in their tenement home. According to Riis, cigarmakers worked from 6am until 9pm, seven days a week. They earned just $3.75 for every thousand cigars made and produced around 3,000 cigars a week.

1889: ‘FIVE CENTS A SPOT’

▼ Immigrant lodgers cram into a boarding room on Bayard Street, which charged ‘five cents a spot’. Riis wrote: “In a room not 13 feet either way slept 12 men and women, two or three in bunks set in a sort of alcove, the rest on the floor.”

1888/9: GANGS OF NEW YORK

◀ Members of the Short Tail gang, which terrorised New York’s east side, gather under the pier in what is now Corlears Hook. Known for their distinctive short-tailed jacket coats, the gang was described in a newspaper report from 1884 as being “known to police as hard drinkers, thieves, pickpockets and highwaymen”, often committing crimes on boats along the water front. ⊙

GET HOOKED

READ

How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York (Classic Reprint), by Jacob A Riis (Forgotten Books, 2018)

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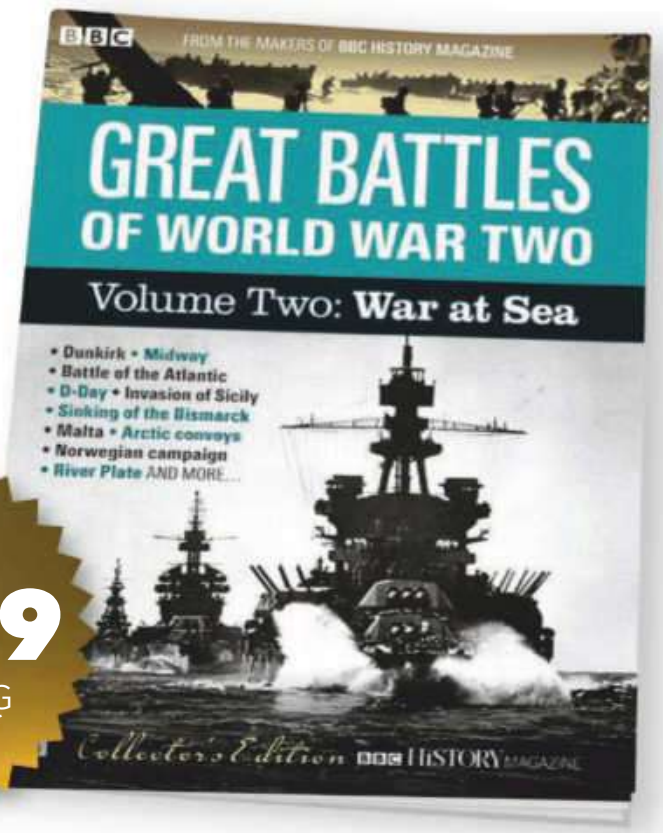
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GETTY IMAGES

Newspaper publisher, activist and would-be Vice President, Charlotta Bass fought against racial discrimination and social injustice in the US

THE INCREDIBLE LIFE OF CHARLOTTA BASS

As US voters prepare to take to the ballot box, **Sonia Grant** tells the remarkable story of a civil rights activist whose decades-long fight for change saw her become the first woman of colour to run for Vice President

LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

The FBI agent had been sitting in his hot, stuffy car all day, once again tasked with surveilling the nursing home across the street. It was another uneventful day. He noted the comings and goings: deliveries of crates of milk and groceries; the postman making his rounds; nursing staff in their starched uniforms either arriving or leaving; and, towards early evening, a steady stream of relatives visiting elderly residents. When the agent finished his shift, he drove back to the office and typed up what he determined would be his final entry: "July 3, 1967, Charlotta A Bass Case Closed".

What possible security threat could a bedridden black woman in her nineties pose? Yet despite being incapacitated by a stroke, Charlotta Bass remained a target of FBI surveillance until 1967, two years before her death, and could be arrested on sight if deemed in breach of national security. Her 500 plus page dossier bulged with reports that spanned five decades. It chronicled her denunciations of the Ku Klux Klan; her elevation as the first black American woman to edit and own a newspaper; her championing of civil rights; her political agitation; and, most importantly, her 1952 bid to become Vice President of the United States.

Born Charlotta Amanda Spears in 1874 (or 1880, records differ), she was one of 11 children. Growing up in South Carolina, her family, like all black families, endured discrimination, segregation, prejudicial and, at times, violent treatment, which was sanctioned in law by the Black Codes or so called Jim Crow laws. In later life, Charlotta would be horrified that it was her home state long steeped in bigotry and proud of its Confederate past that had no compunction in sending a 14 year old black boy named George Stinney to the electric chair.

Every facet of black life was dominated by the pernicious reach of segregation: where black people could live and marry, what school or university they could attend, what type of employment or profession was either open or barred to them, and where they could worship or even be buried.

After leaving school, Charlotta moved to Rhode Island to escape the South's overt repression and live with her brother, Ellis. She enrolled at Pembroke College (now part of Brown University) and got a job selling subscriptions for a local black newspaper. There for several years, it was the beginning of an illustrious career in journalism.

STANDING UP TO HATE

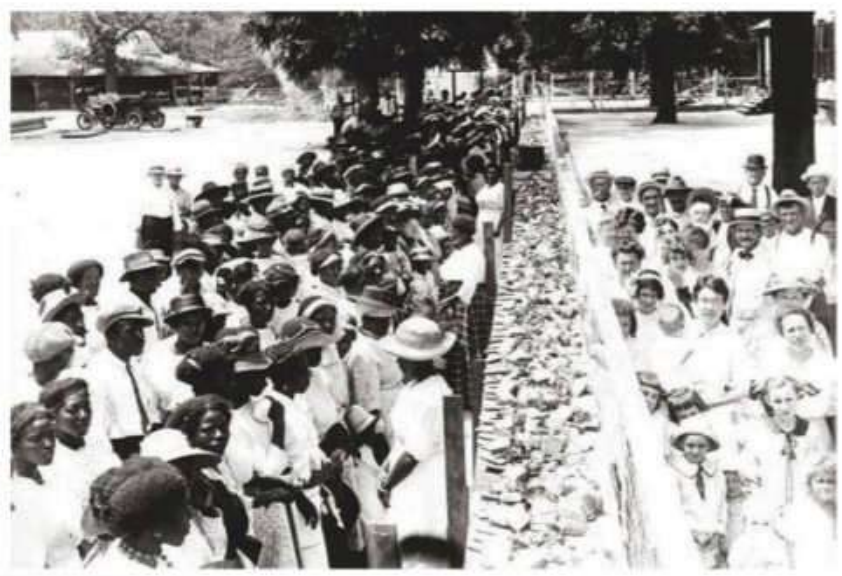
In 1912, a few years after moving to California, the now thirty-something Charlotta's journalistic skills and dogged determination saw her galvanise another black newspaper, *The California Eagle*. She worked and ran the paper for a little under 40 years, during which she became Charlotta Bass after her marriage to Joseph Bass, the man she had originally brought in as editor.

One of Charlotta's first campaigns called for a ban of DW Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, a revisionist film that

Charlotta Spears pictured while living in Rhode Island, where she landed her first newspaper job

BELOW: **Black people and white people eat separately at a segregated barbecue in 1930s Alabama**

BOTTOM: **Charlotta Bass was publisher of *The California Eagle* for nearly 40 years**



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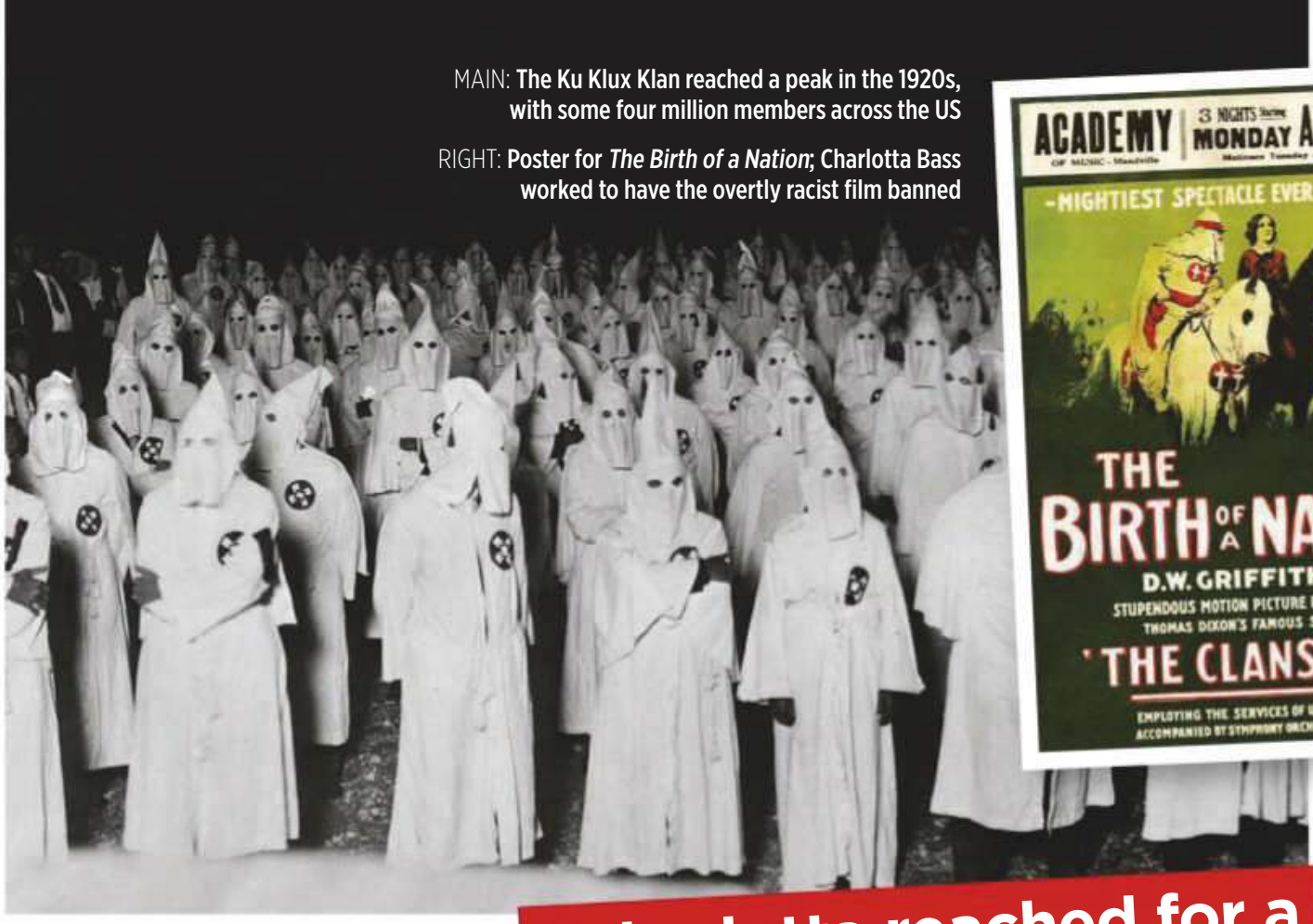
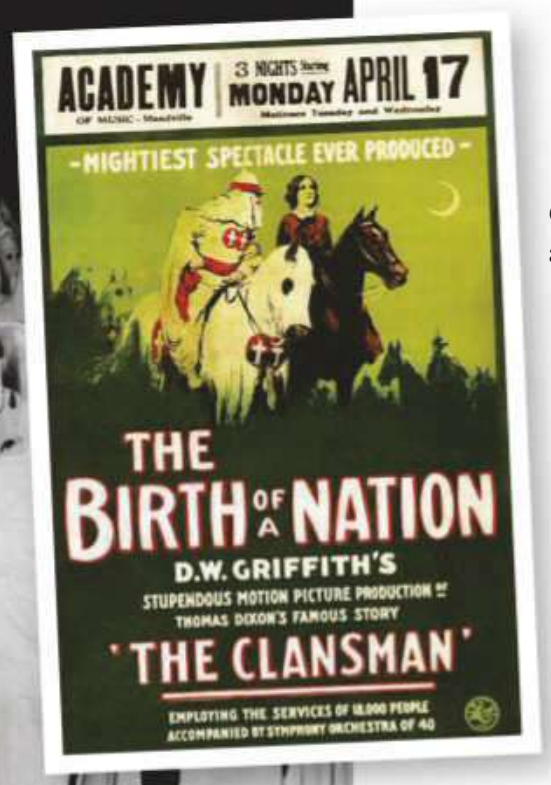


MAIN: **The Ku Klux Klan reached a peak in the 1920s, with some four million members across the US**

RIGHT: **Poster for *The Birth of a Nation*; Charlotta Bass worked to have the overtly racist film banned**



romanticised the Confederate South's 'lost cause' in the Civil War – the film depicted black people (white actors in blackface) as savage, and reignited interest and mass membership of the KKK. For her trouble, while Charlotta worked late at the office one evening, eight hooded Klansmen tried to break in. She reached for a gun kept in a drawer and, not knowing how to shoot, brandished it and caused the would-be assailants to scatter.

Nonetheless, much of Charlotta's energy throughout the 1920s was consumed by confronting the KKK and thwarting their attempts to subvert the political apparatus in Los Angeles, in part through infiltrating law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. By the 1930s, she had burnished her credentials as a formidable campaigner and gained a reputation for single-mindedness, even if it resulted in humiliation – such as when she was pelted with rotten apples while addressing an anti-draft rally in 1932.

The next two decades saw Charlotta hone her pragmatic character: she was both a member of the 'conservative' National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the more 'radical' Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) under the leadership

"Charlotta reached for a gun kept in a drawer and caused the hooded Klansmen to scatter"

of Marcus Garvey. Charlotta forged coalitions across racial lines and championed miscarriage of justice cases such as the arrest of hundreds of Mexican American youths following the so called Sleepy Lagoon murder in 1942 and civil liberty violations, including the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

AT HOME AND ABROAD

Other regular features of *The California Eagle*'s front pages included segregated schools, job discrimination, police brutality against black people, and housing. Racism on the West Coast may have manifested differently to the South for one lynchings were not as prevalent but there were still clear demarcations as to where black people could live. Restrictive covenants in housing prohibited black people, including celebrities such as *Gone with the Wind* Oscar winner Hattie McDaniel and jazz legend Nat King Cole, from living in neighbourhoods that had been exclusively white.

Charlotta's unwavering outspokenness in her newspaper came at both professional and personal risk. During the 1940s, the Office of the Secretary of War had the black press under scrutiny, and Charlotta drew attention with a petition against segregation in the US Army, and her promotion of the Double V Campaign (aimed at securing victory for black people both in the armed forces abroad and at home). Her coverage resulted in *The Eagle* being deemed "seditious" and Charlotta herself "subversive" and a "Communist supporter".

It was a dangerous time to face such an accusation. McCarthyism and the fear of communist infiltration meant people could be convicted and imprisoned on the flimsiest of evidence, and if suspects refused to implicate others, their associations were seen as incrimination enough. In Charlotta's case, activists WEB DuBois and Paul Robeson both suspected communists.

Regardless, Charlotta was especially busy in 1950. She travelled to Europe, with FBI agents ordered to tail her, "a short, elderly negro, female, grey hair, fat, wearing glasses [and] waddling walk". Charlotta attended the Defenders of the Peace Committee of the World Congress in Paris and Prague, and spent ten days in Moscow, reporting that she encountered no racial discrimination and comparing the Soviet Union favourably to the US. This was much to the chagrin of the authorities back home. Upon her return, Charlotta was summoned to appear before California's Joint Fact Finding Committee on Un American Activities.

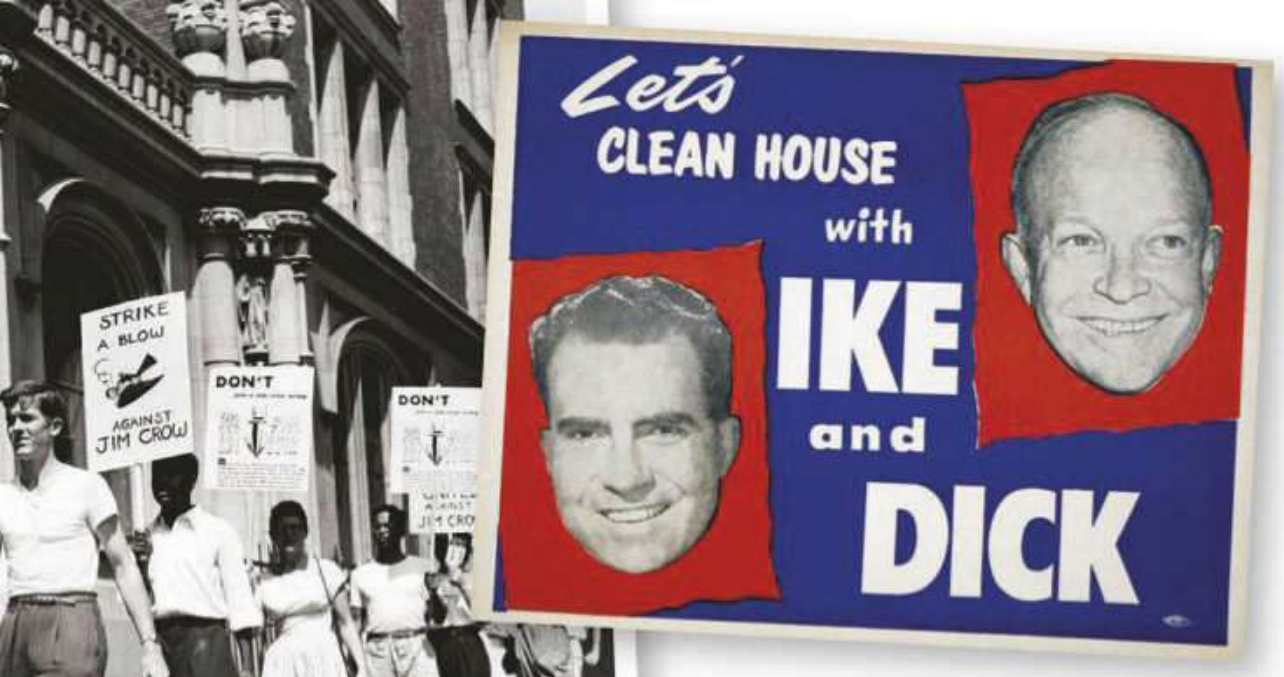
In terms of her political allegiance, Charlotta had been a life long Republican, but had grown disillusioned at what ▶

The 20th annual session of the NAACP in 1929, among them friend of Charlotta Bass, WEB DuBois (*seated in front row, fifth from the left*)

Charlotta Bass holds the hands of her presidential running mate Vincent Hallinan (*to Charlotta's right*) and singer and actor-turned-activist Paul Robeson

"I shall continue to tell the truth as a good progressive citizen, and a good American"

Charlotta Bass



ABOVE: **A 1952 Eisenhower-Nixon campaign poster**

LEFT: **A demonstration against segregation in the US armed forces in 1948, the same year it was abolished by President Truman**

she saw as 'the party of Lincoln' taking black people's loyalty for granted with little, in the way of legislation or repeal of Jim Crow laws, to show for it. Similarly unimpressed with the Democrats, Charlotta threw her support behind the left-wing Progressive Party.

After selling *The Eagle* in 1951, Charlotta turned her focus to politics. Although she had run unsuccessfully for a congressional seat in 1950, she made inroads with her new party. Renowned for her activism and campaigning, it was hoped that Charlotta's profile within the black community could be capitalised, as courting the black electorate was a key part of the party's election strategy.

BLACK TO THE WHITE HOUSE

On 30 March 1952, Charlotta was nominated as the Progressive Party candidate for Vice President of the United States, the first black woman ever to be selected – and over a decade before the Voting Rights Act, which would formally prohibit racial discrimination in voting. Charlotta's running mate, a radical San Francisco lawyer named Vincent Hallinan, had just begun a six-month prison sentence for contempt of court. He would brag that he was a descendant of Irish revolutionaries and had dozens of fistfights with other lawyers in courthouse corridors.

It was while defending union leader Harry Bridges in a high-profile fraud and perjury trial that Hallinan was imprisoned. His client was convicted of perjury – a verdict overturned by the Supreme Court – while Hallinan's petition to have his sentence commuted (to enable him to join Charlotta and the campaign) was rejected.

Even with its presidential candidate behind bars, the Progressive Party proceeded with its convention in Chicago. Hallinan's multi-millionaire property developer wife, Vivian, accepted the nomination on his behalf. The party's manifesto was considered radical; some of its pledges included universal healthcare, an end to racial discrimination, reduction of armaments, recognition of the People's Republic of China and its admittance to the United Nations, and cessation of the Korean War.

ON A WATCH TOWER

In her acceptance speech, with the party's co chair Paul Robeson by her side, Charlotta proudly declared: "For the first time in the history of this nation a political party has chosen a Negro woman for the second highest office in the land.

"[For] 40 years, I stood on a watch tower, watching the tide of racial hatred and bigotry rising against my people and against all people who believe the Constitution is something more than a piece of yellowed paper to be shut off in a glass case in the archives, but a living document, a working instrument for freedom," she said.

In August, Hallinan finally joined the campaign after being released. They did not think they would win their slogan was "Win or Lose, We Win by Raising the Issues" but Hallinan and Charlotta secured just 0.2 per cent in the election (135,007 votes, compared to the more than 33 million votes gained by election winner Republican Dwight Eisenhower).

Charlotta, now in her late 70s, decided she had finished with party politics, but found other avenues, principally community activism, in order to pursue her life long commitment to civil rights.

Towards the end of her life, as FBI agents still kept her under watch, Charlotta remained unapologetic, defiant even, despite enduring the dark days of McCarthyism, decades of government surveillance and a lifetime of relentless prejudice, saying: "I am willing to face it again... I shall continue to tell the truth as I know it and believe it, as a good progressive citizen, and a good American."

GET HOOKED

WATCH AND LISTEN

BBC

Get extensive coverage of the 2020 US presidential election, which takes place on 3 November, on BBC television, radio and online

THREE MORE WOMEN OF COLOUR WHO HAVE SHAPED US POLITICS

FANNIE LOU HAMER 1917–77
CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

◀ Fired from her job for registering to vote, and beaten to within an inch of her life after being arrested and assaulted by prison guards – who then ordered black inmates to continue the beating – for attending a voter registration workshop, the Mississippi sharecropper never fully recovered yet remained committed to helping hundreds of African-American people register to vote. Despite intimidation, Hamer co-founded the Freedom Democratic Party, embodying the angst of Black America in her impassioned speech in 1964: "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired".

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM 1924–2005
FIRST BLACK WOMAN ELECTED TO CONGRESS

◀ A force of nature and progressive before the term was popularised, Shirley Chisholm, daughter of Caribbean immigrants, was elected to the United States Congress in 1968. She went on to become America's first female and first black presidential candidate for a major party, running for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1972. Noted for her all-female staff, Chisholm refused to allow anyone to define her, as was apparent in her campaign slogan (and later title of her biography): "Unbought and Unbossed". She served a total of seven terms in the House of Representatives.

KAMALA HARRIS 1964–
AMERICAN LAWYER AND POLITICIAN

▼ The daughter of high-achieving immigrant parents – a biologist mother from India and economist father from Jamaica – Kamala Harris is a former district attorney and attorney general of California, and is a California senator. Earlier this year, Harris became the first African-American and the first Asian-American woman to be selected as a vice-presidential candidate for a major political party.

GETTY IMAGES X6

WHAT IF...

JAPAN DIDN'T ATTACK PEARL HARBOR?

Jonny Wilkes talks to **Professor Robert Cribb** about whether the United States would still have entered World War II without, as their president put it, the "date which will live in infamy"

Sunday, 7 December 1941: a day that changed the course of World War II. Japan launched a daring surprise strike on the chief US naval base in the Pacific at Pearl Harbor near Honolulu, Hawaii killing more than 2,400 Americans and ending the United States' policy of neutrality. The next day, Congress declared war.

At the most extreme, no attack on Pearl Harbor could have meant no US entering the war, no ships of soldiers pouring over the Atlantic, and no D Day, all putting 'victory in Europe' in doubt. On the other side of the world, it could have meant no Pacific Theatre and no use of the atomic bomb. This all depends on whether the US would have stayed out of the fight.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, planned in response to debilitating US economic restrictions, aimed to knock out the Pacific Fleet and crush American morale in one fell swoop. But the plan very possibly could have been shelved.

"Many Japanese leaders, including Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, were keen to avoid a long war against the United States, conscious of the huge disparity in economic power between the two," says Robert Cribb, professor in Asian history at the Australian National University. "Their preference was for agreeing [to the US demand] to wind back their presence in China in exchange for a loosening of the embargoes."

Emperor Hirohito similarly had misgivings about going to war, so Pearl Harbor may just have been spared if he had imposed his will on his government. Without that commitment to pre-emptive military aggression, the imperial leadership may have looked to agree to US demands, but in a "partial, half hearted and insincere way that was nonetheless sufficient to placate the US", according to Cribb. If this successfully eased tensions, they could turn their attention to winning the war that had been raging against China since 1937.

"Japan's practice had always been incremental expansion Taiwan, then Korea, then the attempt in Siberia, then Manchuria, then slices of north China," says Cribb. "The Sino Japanese War was not in their playbook and they hoped to find Chinese partners with whom to sign a peace." Any kind of deal with the Chinese nationalist government under Chiang Kai shek may have preserved some of Japan's interests but, Cribb adds, would have been near to impossible following the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, which had seen the mass killing and ravaging of many thousands of Chinese citizens and capitulated soldiers by the Japanese Imperial Army.

WAS WAR BETWEEN THE US AND JAPAN INEVITABLE?

In truth, the economic restrictions placed on Japan an embargo on the sale of oil, the freezing of Japanese assets in the US, and the Panama Canal being closed to Japanese shipping left its empire vulnerable. Supplies of natural resources needed to be secured for any hopes of expansion. With Russia an unlikely option after a recent chastening defeat by the Soviets, the Japanese would always look to Southeast Asia.

Japan occupied French Indochina in 1940 and was targeting the Philippines. But this was a US protectorate, meaning Japan would still come into conflict with the US, even if not at the headquarters of their Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

It was not just the US that the Japanese would be taking on. Expanding into Southeast Asia meant facing the British in Burma, Malaysia and Singapore, and the Dutch. "The most useful alternative development for Japan would have been to engineer a coup in the Dutch East Indies [Indonesia]," says

IN CONTEXT

Tensions between the US and Japan had been growing since the 1930s, following the Japanese invasions of Manchuria, China and French Indochina. Then, in September 1940, a year after World War II began, Japan sealed its alliance with Germany and Italy. The US responded with a host of economic restrictions. With the two nations edging closer to war, Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the home of the US Pacific Fleet, on the morning of 7 December 1941.

Two waves of hundreds of aircraft bombarded the navy vessels docked on 'Battleship Row' and strafed the airfields. Within 90 minutes, more than 2,400 people were dead. President Franklin D Roosevelt addressed Congress the next day, calling 7 December 1941 a "date which will live in infamy", and the US – which had officially maintained a policy of neutrality, despite supplying Britain with resources through the Lend-Lease system – declared war on Japan.

US President Franklin D Roosevelt, wearing a black armband, signs the declaration of war against Japan

GETTY IMAGES X3

USS *West Virginia* burns on Pearl Harbor's Battleship Row; it sank, but was salvaged, repaired and later took part in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa

Japanese airmen receive their final instructions before bombing the American naval base at Pearl Harbor

Cribb. "It might have given Japan access to crucial oilfields, but such a coup would have been difficult and the US was unlikely to permit the Japanese to bypass the embargoes in that way."

Even without the Pearl Harbor attack then, the US may have been driven to war by aggression in Southeast Asia. A deeply antagonistic relationship with Japan had developed in the 1930s, since the invasion of China. "Japan's great strategic error was to join the Tripartite Pact in September 1940," states Cribb. "The Pact [forming the Axis Powers with Nazi Germany and Italy] was of no strategic use to Japan, but it had the effect of confirming the US view that Japan was the enemy."

US President Franklin D Roosevelt recognised the threat of the Axis Powers and was stretching the limits of US neutrality by supporting Britain. Through Lend Lease, the US supplied weapons, vehicles, food and other resources to help with the war effort, making the country the "arsenal of democracy". But FDR struggled to convince isolationists that US involvement was imperative.

DID YOU KNOW?

HEAVY TOLL

Of the 2,403 official fatalities suffered by the US in the attack on Pearl Harbor, 1,177 were on board the USS *Arizona*. The battleship was struck by several bombs including a direct hit that ignited the forward magazine, causing a huge explosion.

"EVEN WITHOUT PEARL HARBOR, THE US MAY HAVE BEEN DRIVEN TO WAR BY JAPAN'S AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA"

Without such a shocking attack as Pearl Harbor, winning this support would be more difficult. It is extremely unlikely that a Japanese attack on the Philippines, Dutch East Indies or British controlled parts of Southeast Asia could provoke the same reaction for revenge. Yet FDR was committing support to the Allied forces and eager to persuade the isolationists that joining the war was essential to US interests, says Cribb. The chances are that the US would still have entered the war, but by a longer road.

If that meant the war went on for longer, then Japan would have faced steadily greater difficulties in maintaining control of Southeast Asia, claims Cribb. The "immense disparity between the US and Japanese economies" would still have given the Americans a key advantage. However, if the war progressed without the attack on Pearl Harbor, the closing stages may still have seen the US and Japan with a shared desire, too keeping the Soviets' role at a minimum. As Cribb notes: "The Japanese authorities desperately wanted to avoid being occupied by the Soviets, while the US was keen not to share the occupation."

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4 Listen to a first-hand account of the attack on Pearl Harbor on an episode of *Witness History*.
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Men of No 83 Squadron are all smiles as they pass a Handley Page Hampden bomber at RAF Scampton, Lincolnshire, October 1940

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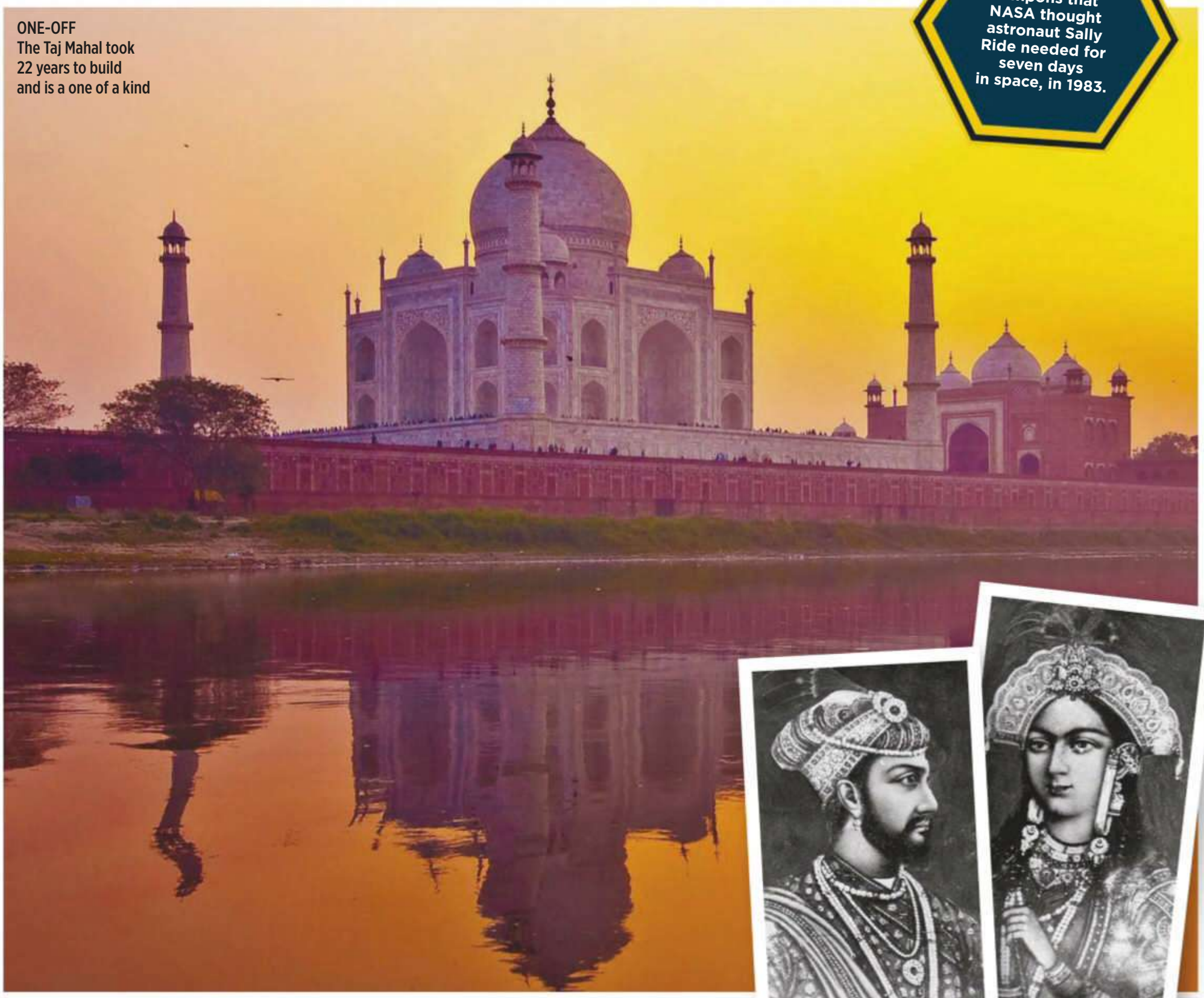
100
The number of tampons that NASA thought astronaut Sally Ride needed for seven days in space, in 1983.



ONE-OFF
The Taj Mahal took 22 years to build and is a one of a kind

Was there meant to be a black Taj Mahal?

LOVING COUPLE
Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and his wife Mumtaz Mahal, in a split image from c1640

SHORT ANSWER Probably not: isn't one wonder of the architectural world enough?

LONG ANSWER On the bank of the Yamuna River at Agra, India, stands one of the world's most famous specimens of architecture: the Taj Mahal. The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan commissioned the stunning mausoleum complex for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their 14th child in 1631. Some 22 years and a fortune later, his white-marble masterpiece had been completed.

Shah Jahan was not done, according to legend, as he intended to build a second mausoleum for himself on the other side of the river, connected by a bridge, and identical except that his would be made of black marble. Unfortunately for Shah Jahan, he was deposed in 1658 by his son and the black Taj Mahal was never built. That is, if he actually planned it at all.

There is no evidence of such a construction project – save for slabs of darkened marble, which turned out to be discoloured rather than black anyway – and building one Taj Mahal had emptied the empire's coffers, let alone a second. Add to that the fact that the first mention of the black Taj Mahal comes from a fanciful French traveller named Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who visited Agra during Shah Jahan's reign, and this seems to be another historical myth.

GETTY IMAGES X3

ANCIENT POST-IT NOTES
Pottery sherds were used in place of scrap paper in the ancient world

What was an 'ostracon'?

SHORT ANSWER Before paper became everyone's favourite material for making notes, or casting a vote, pottery had to do instead

LONG ANSWER It should come as no surprise that pottery was always plentiful in Ancient Greece, and it wasn't just used for beautiful pieces of art and future museum fillers. Sherds of pottery, often broken off an old vase, substituted nicely for a scrap bit of paper. When the Athenians met once a year to decide on whether a member of their society should be banished, they voted by scratching the name of the person on a pottery sherds, or *ostracon*. If a minimum of 6,000 ballots were cast and resulted in banishment, the unlucky exile had ten days to leave Attica for a period of ten years. The use of ostraca in this process gave birth to the word 'ostracise'.

Examples of ostraca could also be found in Egypt, where papyrus was far too expensive and precious for everyday use, meaning pottery and limestone did nicely as ancient post-it notes.

0
The number of deaths during the battle of Fort Sumter, the first battle in the American Civil War, fought 12-13 April 1861.

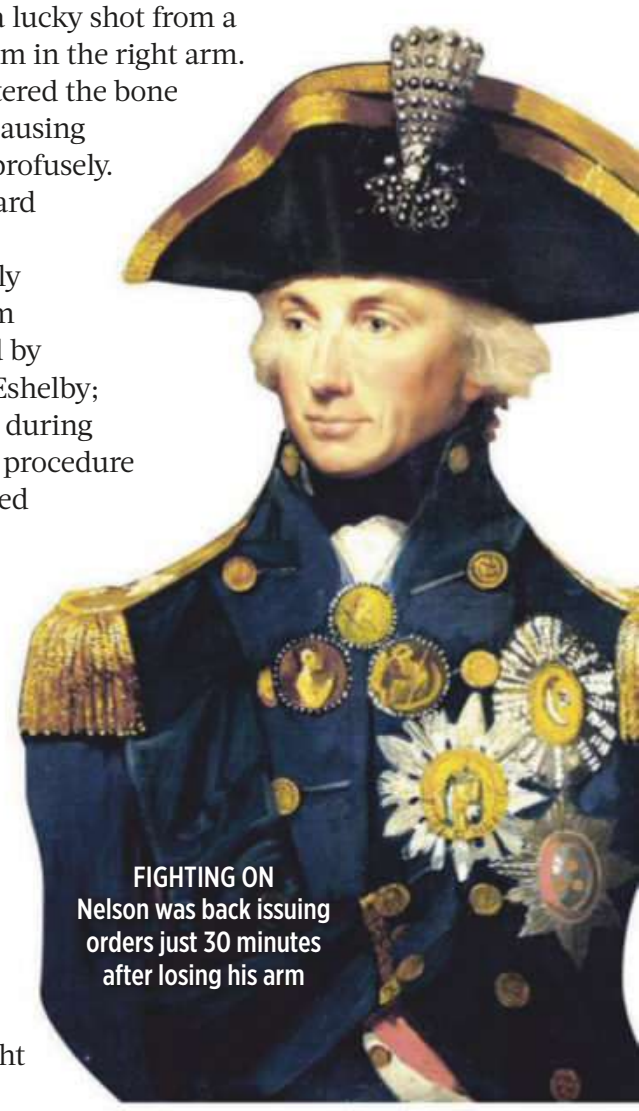
How did Horatio Nelson lose his arm?

SHORT ANSWER It had to be amputated during a battle for Tenerife (with knives that were too cold)

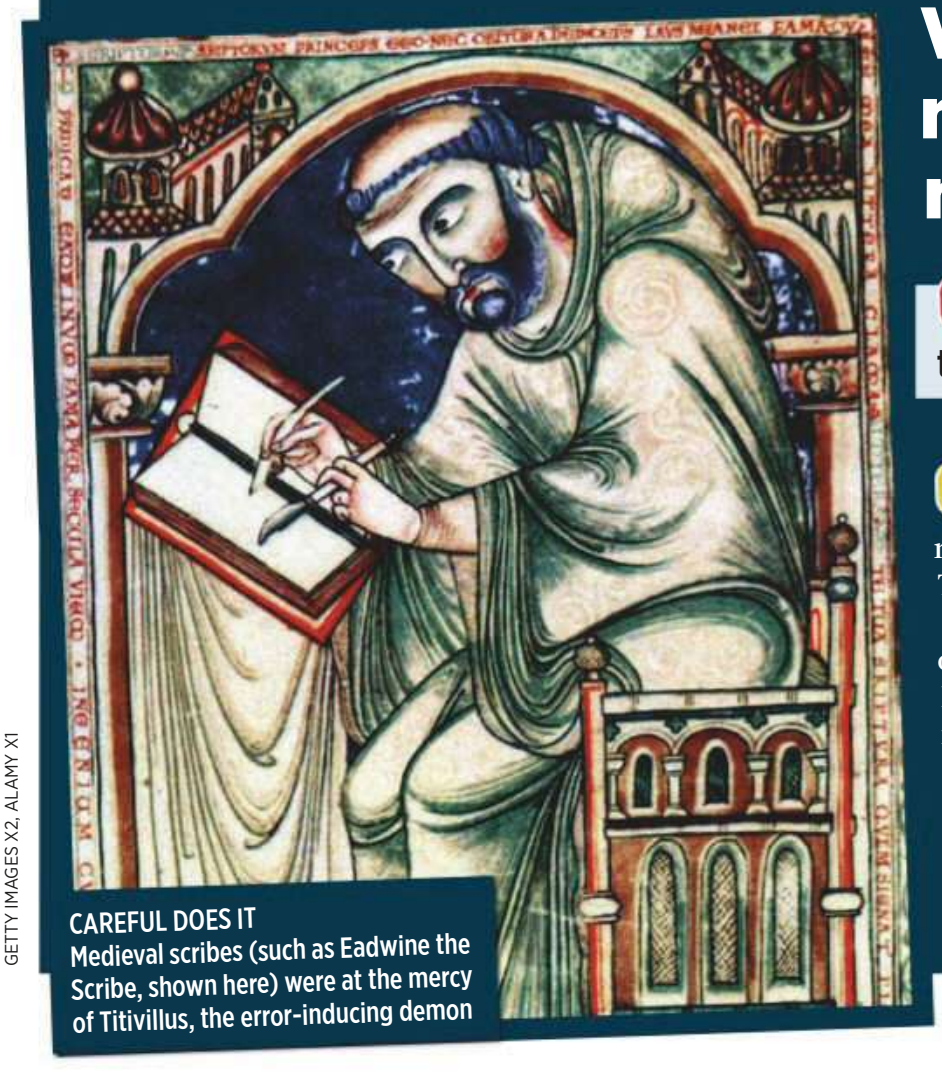
LONG ANSWER Leading the assault on the Spanish island of Tenerife cost Horatio Nelson an arm and a leg. Well, just an arm. As the revered British admiral came ashore on 24 July 1797, a lucky shot from a Spanish defender hit him in the right arm. The musket ball shattered the bone and cut an artery, causing Nelson to bleed profusely. Rushed aboard HMS *Theseus*, he immediately ordered the arm to be amputated by surgeon Thomas Eshelby; his only complaint during the anaesthetic-free procedure was that the blades used were too cold.

Just 30 minutes later, Nelson was back in the fight issuing orders – proving that being armless did not make him harmless.

In 1798, at his famous victory at the Battle of the Nile, Nelson picked up another career-threatening injury when he was shot in the head, yet lived to fight another day.



FIGHTING ON
Nelson was back issuing orders just 30 minutes after losing his arm



CAREFUL DOES IT
Medieval scribes (such as Eadwine the Scribe, shown here) were at the mercy of Titivillus, the error-inducing demon

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1

What happened when medieval scribes made mistakes?

SHORT ANSWER They could utilise a number of copyediting tricks, or they could curse the patron demon of scribes

LONG ANSWER The answer is that they never made mistakes. Oops, no, that's wrong – Titivillus strikes again!

The intricate and arduous work of copying out a manuscript by hand, complete with beautiful illuminations, was never going to be without error. Nearly every manuscript boasts mistakes, including famous texts like the Book of Kells.

The obvious, if disheartening, option for a scribe would be to start again and glue the new page over the spoiled one, or perhaps use a knife to scrape, very gently, the ink off the parchment. If just a few words were missing, additions could be included in the margins or as a footnote, or little dots placed under the wrong word so readers ignored it. In some cases, whole paragraphs could be crossed out.

If all else failed, a scribe could lay the blame on Titivillus, a demon hell-bent on adding errors to texts.

POINT OF NO RETURN
Kamikaze pilots receive a crash course in the use of joysticks for their one-time mission. The damage they did was significant, such as that to USS *Bunker Hill* (*inset, right*) in May 1945

What happened to failed kamikaze pilots?

SHORT ANSWER Generally, still-alive kamikaze would avoid punishment, although, like cats, they had nine lives

LONG ANSWER Thousands of Japanese pilots took their lives during World War II by intentionally crashing their planes, loaded with bombs or extra gasoline, into enemy ships. Japan could not keep up with the US in terms of resources so kamikaze attacks were seen as a more (brutally) efficient use of their air power, and more effective than bombing runs.

Many men volunteered to be kamikaze, regarding it a supreme honour to give their life for the empire. Despite the extremely harsh training of beatings and mentally preparing for death, kamikaze received better rations and were held in high respect.

When the time came for their suicide mission, kamikaze gulped down some liquid courage and flew in squadrons – in the belief that peer pressure would keep them going. If a pilot did turn back, though, they would not necessarily be punished. As long as they had done it for good reasons, such as bad weather or mechanical problems, they would return to training and have to try again another time. Japan could not afford to lose a pilot for zero gain. Nine returns, though, would see them executed for cowardice.

DID YOU KNOW?

PIP AND PITS
Girls looking for a husband in 19th-century Austria would dance with slices of apple held in their armpits. At the end of the evening, they presented the sweaty slices of apple to the man of their choice; if he liked her, he would take a bite.

IN THE BLOOD
Three kings of Scotland in a row, all called James, died in battle. The first was James II, who died in 1460 after one of his own cannons exploded next to him. And both his son and grandson perished before the middle of the 16th century.

THE FLAG SNAG
It was only when Liechtenstein took part in its first Olympic games, in 1936, that the country discovered its flag was identical to the national flag of Haiti (horizontal blue and red bands). The following year, they added a crown.

AS WRITE AS A FEATHER
The feathers used to make quills usually came from the primary flight feathers of living geese, swans or crows. Generally, they would come from the left wing so that the quill curved away from a right-handed writer.

What was the Kentucky Meat Shower?

SHORT ANSWER Not a matter of raining cats and dogs, but raining beef, mutton and venison

LONG ANSWER For a few moments on 3 March 1876, it rained in Bath County, Kentucky. But this was no ordinary rain. Chunks of meat, measuring 5–10cm, fell across a small patch outside a farm house, watched on by Mrs Crouch as she made soap.

The cause for the meat-eor shower mystified locals, journalists and the scientists brought in to investigate. One proposal claimed the chunks were not meat at all, but a bacteria called nostoc that clumps into jelly balls in the rain. There had been no rain, though, and the chunks certainly looked like meat. A couple of men even tasted one, judging it to be lamb or deer.

To date, the leading theory is that a group, or kettle, of vultures flying above all regurgitated their food, a not-uncommon defensive method. Something the two men probably wished they knew before chomping down on vulture vomit.

MEAT-EOR SHOWER?
Chunks of meat from the Kentucky Meat Shower

Why is October the tenth month?

SHORT ANSWER The Romans are to blame. It's not that they couldn't count, they just got stuck on the name

LONG ANSWER As it starts with the Latin for 'eight', the tenth month seems to be wrongly placed. That goes for September ('sept' means 'seven'), November ('novem' for 'nine') and December ('decem' for 'ten') too. The names are leftovers from the pre-Julian Roman calendar, which had ten months, with October as the eighth. One problem with this calendar was that the winter period had no month or name. January and February were added in c700 BC by Numa Pompilius, but no one thought it worth changing any of the names.

PROFESSOR KURT GOHDE/TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY X1, GETTY X3

NOT HORSING AROUND
The cause of Catherine the Great's death inspired many salacious rumours

How did Catherine the Great die?

SHORT ANSWER NOT because of her love for horses

LONG ANSWER The Empress of Russia died in 1796 after more than three decades on the throne, expanding the empire's borders and global influence. She had made enemies as a no nonsense ruler – and a woman to boot so stories quickly spread about the manner of her demise.

A rather tame example asserted that Catherine died on the toilet. But with a not so secret list of lovers, Catherine also had plenty of salacious claims thrown at her while alive about her supposedly promiscuous, insatiable and deviant personal life. Once dead, a particularly pernicious rumour caught people's attention, and still does today even, without a shred of truth. Supposedly, Catherine died from being crushed by a horse suspended over her bed in a harness.

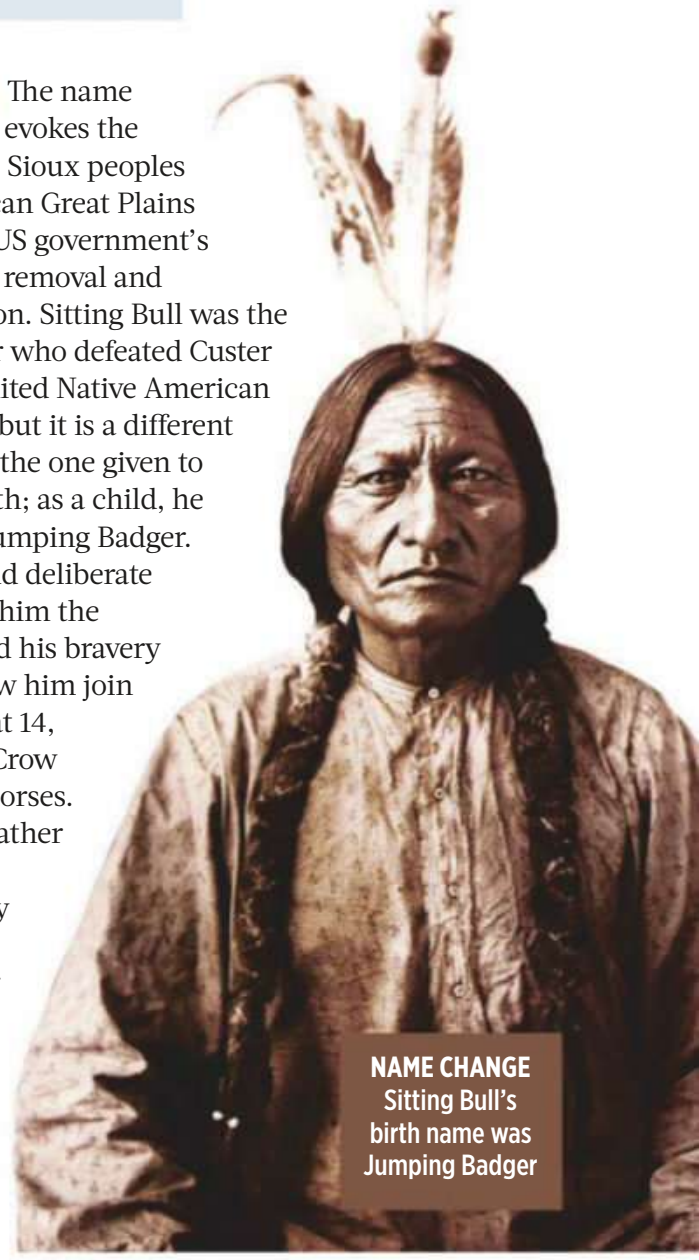
The truth is far more mundane as Catherine died, aged 67, of a stroke. She supposedly collapsed in the bathroom, though – so the toilet rumour wasn't too far off.

16
The number of days after opening that Alexandra Palace was destroyed in a fire in 1873.

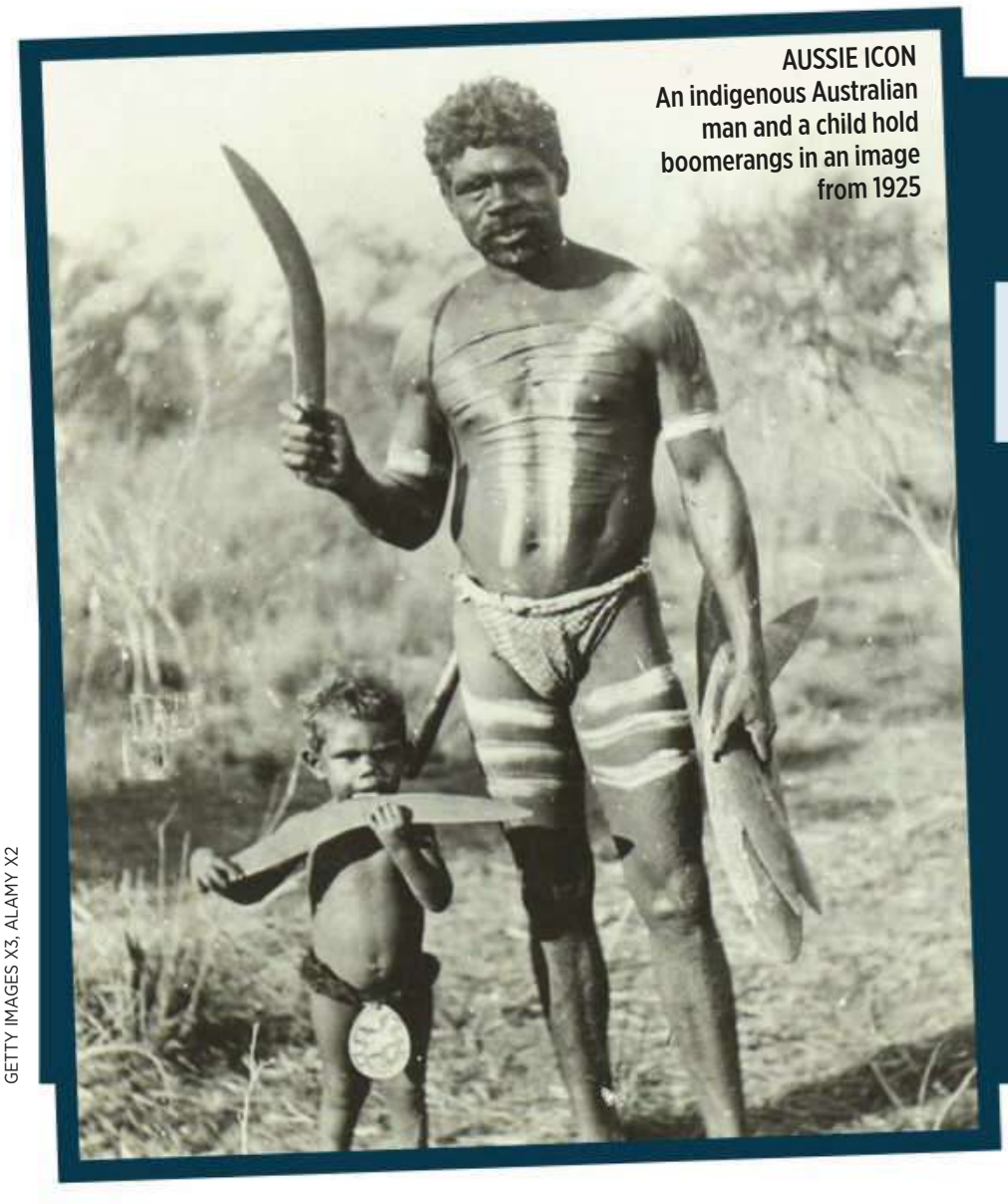
Why was he called Sitting Bull?

SHORT ANSWER The warrior leader wasn't exactly named after his father – he actually took his father's name

LONG ANSWER The name evokes the struggles of the Sioux peoples of the American Great Plains against the US government's policies of removal and oppression. Sitting Bull was the warrior who defeated Custer and united Native American tribes, but it is a different name to the one given to him at birth; as a child, he was called Jumping Badger. His calm and deliberate manner earned him the nickname Slow, and his bravery and fearlessness saw him join his first war party at 14, raiding a group of Crow warriors for their horses. Jumping Badger's father was so impressed that he gave the boy his own name, Tatanka-Iyotake, or Buffalo Bull Who Sits Down. This became Sitting Bull, while his father took the name Jumping Bull.



NAME CHANGE
Sitting Bull's birth name was Jumping Badger



AUSSIE ICON
An indigenous Australian man and a child hold boomerangs in an image from 1925

Is the boomerang Australian?

SHORT ANSWER Boomerang-looking sticks have existed all over, but that doesn't stop us always coming back to Oz

LONG ANSWER So connected is the boomerang to the indigenous peoples of Australia that it is part of their creation story, the Dreaming. The word is thought to derive from the Dharuk word '*wo-mur-rang*' (throwing stick).

Used for hunting, warfare, digging, fire starting, as a musical instrument and toy, the curved stick has come in all shapes and sizes, and was not necessarily designed to return to the thrower.

Its status as an Australian icon is well-deserved, with a 10,000-year-old boomerang discovered, in 1973, in a peat bog in South Australia, and rock art depictions showing them to be much older than that.

The idea of a curved throwing stick was not confined to Australia, however. Boomerangs have been found all over the world, including India (called *valai tadis*), North America (used by indigenous peoples), Europe, and Egypt. A collection was among the treasures of Tutankhamun's tomb.

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X2

UP AND AWAY
Jean-Francois Pilatre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes make the first successful manned balloon flight

Who took the first hot air balloon flight?

SHORT ANSWER A French science teacher, if you don't include the sheep, duck or rooster

LONG ANSWER After French brothers and successful paper merchants Joseph Michel and Jacques Etienne Montgolfier observed that heated air made their paper bags rise, 1783 became a real up up and away year for human flight. Their idea got off the ground with a silk balloon, ten metres in diameter and lined with plenty of paper, which they tested without passengers on 4 June.

Next came a demonstration for King Louis XVI. The brothers launched an ornately decorated balloon built with the help of wallpaper manufacturer Jean Baptiste Reveillon at Versailles on 19 September. Along for the ride was a sheep, a duck and a rooster, who all survived the eight-minute ascent and bumpy landing some two miles away.

Now the Montgolfiers could, tentatively, think about human pilots. They carried out the first crewed flight, some weeks later, with a tethered balloon limiting the height to 24 metres. Still, Jean Francois Pilatre de Rozier, a chemistry and physics teacher who petitioned for the honour of being in the basket, returned to earth completely unharmed. On 21 November, he took off again, this time with the Marquis d'Arlandes from the centre of Paris, in the inaugural free flight. The spectacle was a crowd pleasing success. Rozier kept ballooning until his, perhaps unsurprising, death in an experimental balloon partially filled with hydrogen, which caught fire just 30 minutes after take-off.

Who was the second man in space?

SHORT ANSWER Less than a month after Yuri Gagarin became the first, an American followed him into space

LONG ANSWER As history remembers who came first much easier than second, the name Yuri Gagarin is generally better known than Alan Shepard. Yet if not for scheduling issues, Shepard, one of the original NASA astronauts known as the Mercury Seven, should have beaten the Soviets. His flight had initially been pencilled in for 1960, but kept being postponed until May 1961, by which time Gagarin had seized the much-desired first spot and put the Soviets firmly in the lead in the Space Race.

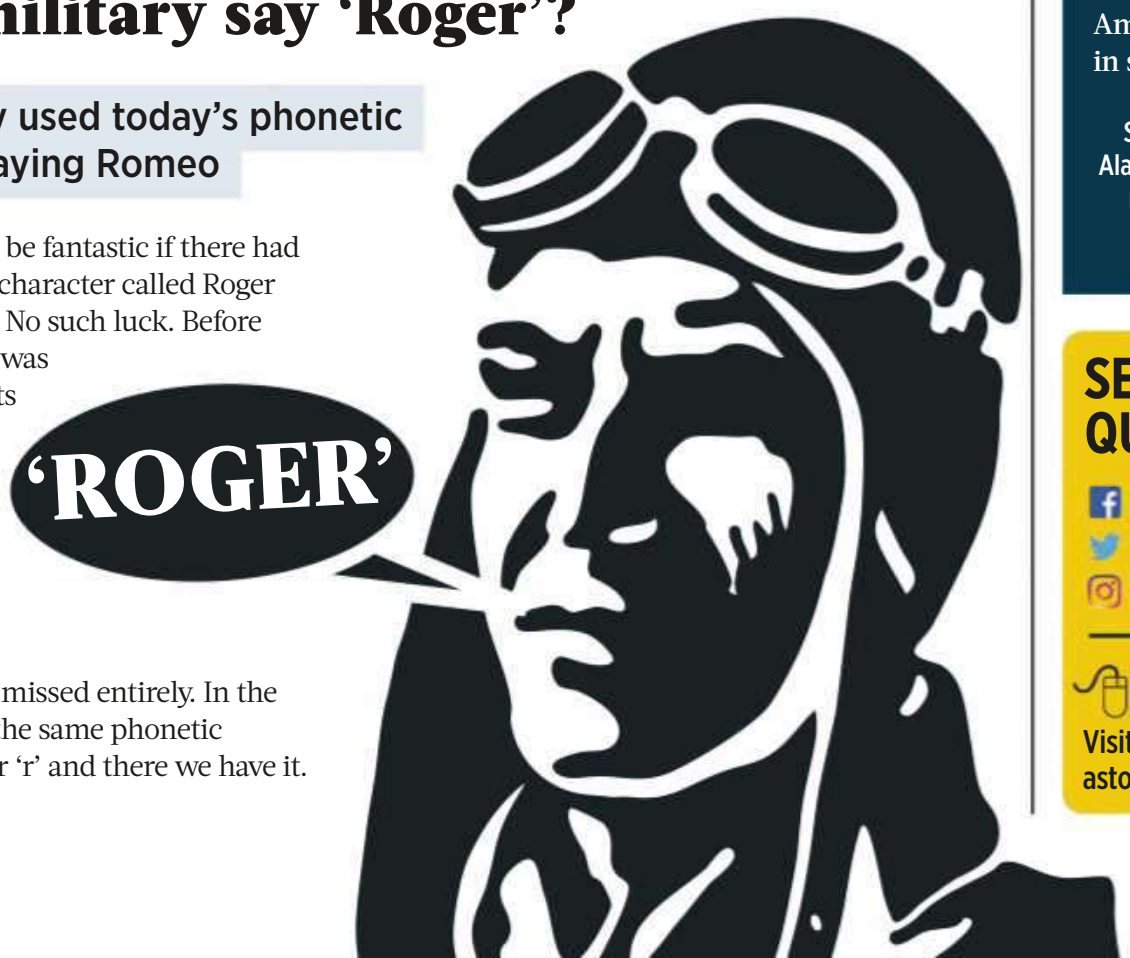
When he heard, Shepard apparently slammed his fist on the table hard enough that it was feared he had broken his hand. He (finally) completed his flight aboard capsule Freedom 7 on 5 May, just 23 days later, making him the first American in space.

SECOND PLACE
Alan Shepard was nearly the first man in space

Why do the military say 'Roger'?

SHORT ANSWER If they used today's phonetic alphabet, they'd be saying Romeo

LONG ANSWER Wouldn't it be fantastic if there had been a real character called Roger who inspired the radio call off? No such luck. Before two way voice communication was widely available on planes, pilots used Morse code to talk to those on the ground, and a common message would be a lone 'r' to mean 'received'. This had to be replaced when the ability to send messages verbally came in, as 'r' could too easily be misheard or missed entirely. In the 1940s, the US and British used the same phonetic alphabet, which used 'Roger' for 'r' and there we have it. Message received? Roger.



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BBC HISTORY REVEALED

ONE TO WATCH

Afua Hirsch (*centre*), Simcha Jacobovici (*left*) and Samuel L Jackson reveal a new perspective on the transatlantic slave trade, making it "real, human and tangible", says Hirsch

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A 19th-century illustration of life below decks on a slave ship

Of human bondage

Enslaved: The Lost History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade / BBC Two, Sunday 4 October

In the UK, the story of the transatlantic slave trade is so often told through the battle of abolitionists to outlaw the trade in humans. And yet that's a narrow and even misleading focus when you consider that as many as 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean over a 300 to 400-year period.

A new four-part series takes a different approach, rooted in telling stories based on archaeological evidence, including dives to some of the wrecks of slave ships that litter the Atlantic floor. This, says co-presenter Afua Hirsch, brings the past to life in a way that documentary evidence, even plans of how slaves were crammed below decks, can never do.

"What you see are drawings and sketches and lists of cargo and prices," she says. "To me, that has always seemed a little bit abstract. And what we've done in the series is really make it real and human and tangible. There are things that you can see and almost touch."

On land, Hirsch, along with Hollywood icon and activist Samuel L Jackson, who "brings a completely different energy to the story", and investigative journalist Simcha Jacobovici, visit locations associated with the slave trade as they tease out how it touched so many lives around the world. Visiting Jamaica, Hirsch says, was to see the parallels between the Caribbean and the Deep South in the US, and how both had economic systems that relied on plantation slavery. "In Britain's case, it happened slightly further away so it was that much easier to ignore," she adds.

It's important, says Hirsch, to engage with Britain's role in the slave trade. "I genuinely see this as a country that I think has the capacity to be more intellectually curious about its own past," she says. "If you can't cope with the facts, then you create a fragility that is really unhealthy and makes it very difficult for you to compete with other nations that have a much more healthy relationship with their own past."

Black and white American men fight side by side during the Korean War, after US President Truman ended discrimination in the armed forces in 1948

Brothers in arms

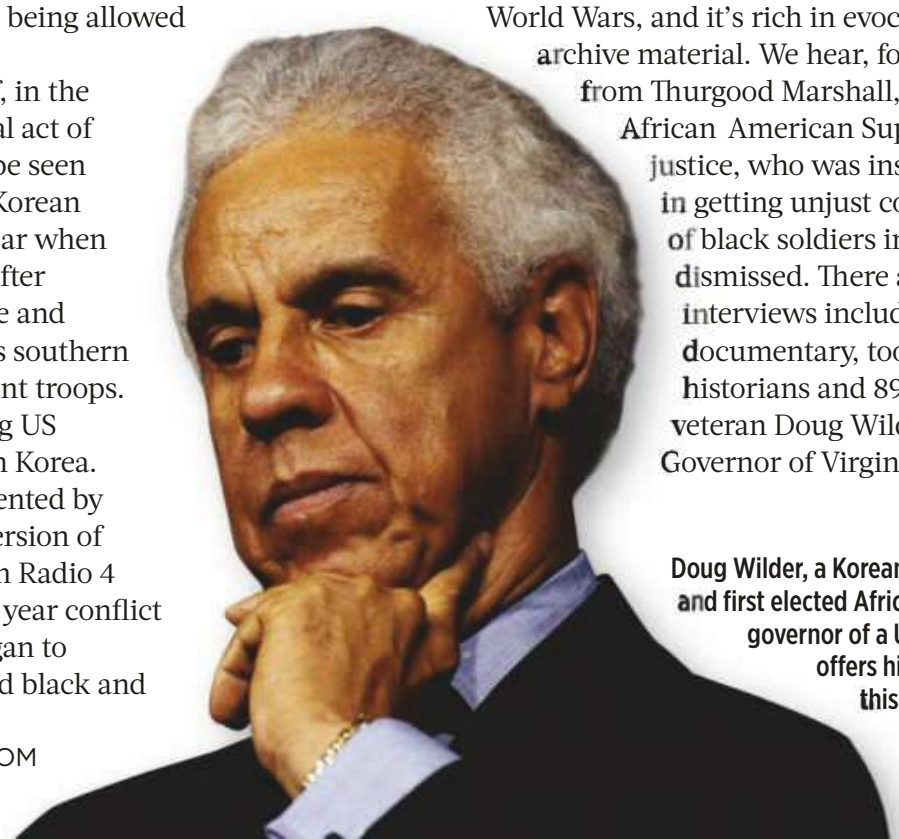
Fighting Together In Korea / BBC World Service, Saturday 24 October

On 26 July 1948, US President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981. With the stroke of a pen, he paved the way for the outlawing of discrimination in the US military based on "race, colour, religion or national origin". No longer, for example, would black soldiers have to wait longer than their white counterparts before being allowed to begin combat training.

But the fullest effects of, in the context of the era, a radical act of desegregation would not be seen until the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. This was a year when the Cold War turned hot after North Korea, with Chinese and Soviet support, invaded its southern neighbour and Truman sent troops. To this day, there's a strong US military presence in South Korea.

As a documentary presented by Brian Palmer a longer version of a programme first aired on Radio 4 explores, this was a three year conflict where the US military began to desegregate in earnest, and black and white soldiers served together rather than in separate units.

It's a documentary that reaches back through 20th century history, outlining Truman's own racist attitudes as a younger man and the racism encountered by black troops who fought in both World Wars, and it's rich in evocative archive material. We hear, for example, from Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court justice, who was instrumental in getting unjust court martials of black soldiers in Korea dismissed. There are new interviews included in the documentary, too, with historians and 89 year old veteran Doug Wilder, later Governor of Virginia.



Doug Wilder, a Korean War veteran and first elected African-American governor of a US state offers his thoughts in this documentary

Life during wartime

A Call To Spy / in cinemas and available on digital HD, Friday 23 October

The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was formed in July 1940. The mission of an organisation latterly dubbed 'Churchill's Secret Army' was to disrupt the Axis powers in occupied Europe and support local resistance movements.

Women as well as men were sent behind enemy lines. In the case of Section F (France), the women's deployment was the responsibility of Vera Atkins, played by Stana Katic in a new drama based on true events.

The film follows Atkins' recruitment of two highly unusual agents: Virginia Hall, an American with a wooden leg (played by Sarah Megan Thomas, *pictured*), and Noor Inayat Khan (Radhika Apte), a Muslim woman who was strongly influenced by pacifist ideals. Of the 41 agents who served in Section F, 12 were executed in Nazi concentration camps.

The blast of the atomic bomb at Nagasaki, an extraordinary chapter in the life of Andy Coogan, is explored in *Time Travels*

GETTY IMAGES X4, LION TELEVISION X2, SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT X1

Bring up the bodies

Britain's Biggest Dig / BBC iPlayer, streaming now

Britain's new high-speed railway, HS2, is a gargantuan project that may eventually cost more than £100 billion to complete. As a new three-part series presented by anthropologist Alice Roberts and historian Yasmin Khan charts, a small but significant part of this budget is being spent on archaeological excavations.

In London, that means digging into the earth of St James's Gardens in Euston, a site earmarked for HS2's terminus. It's a locale rich in history; for a little more than 60 years from 1789, it was a cemetery. As Roberts and Khan visit the site, it's clear this is archaeology on a vast scale. And it needs to be, with more than 50,000 Londoners buried there, including such famous figures as James Christie, founder of the auction house that bears his name.

Many of the graves are remarkably well preserved and, in several cases, the presence of coffin plates means researchers can identify remains as they are so carefully removed. Not that every body buried at the site is still present. There's much in the documentary about the activities of resurrectionists, the body snatchers once employed by anatomists.

In Birmingham, excavations at the Park Street burial ground, located close to an area that was once the stamping ground of the real-life Peaky Blinders, offer a glimpse of life – and death – during the Industrial Revolution.

The vast site at St James's Gardens has revealed thousands of burials, like the one inspected here by Alice Roberts; some remain in

Northern stories

Time Travels / BBC Sounds podcast, Thursday 1 October

First heard on BBC Scotland, *Time Travels* is a magazine series that focuses on history north of the border. It's now being given a second lease of life as a weekly podcast available via the BBC Sounds app and it's well worth seeking out.

Each episode, presented by stand-up comedian and history fan Susan Morrison, explores the kind of unusual stories that might otherwise be the preserve of academic specialists. Stories of women are especially well represented, such as in the third episode when we hear from Dr Rebecca Mason about how, in the 17th century, the authorities in Glasgow regularly used to banish single women from the city if they did not have a master or husband.

Closer to our own time, the fifth episode details the experiences of World War II veteran Andy Coogan, whose remarkably eventful life included toiling in a forced labour camp in Japan as a prisoner of war. The camp was located just 30 miles from Nagasaki, meaning that Coogan had to return home via a city devastated by an American atom bomb attack.

Radical approach

The New Deal: A Story For Our Times / BBC Radio 4, October

Franklin D Roosevelt (*left*) was elected as the 32nd President of the United States in 1932. Coming to power during the Great Depression, his interventionist New Deal, based around the 'three Rs' – relief for those suffering, recovery of the economy and reform of the financial system – helped reshape the country and its politics.

Historian Dr Marybeth Hamilton presents a three-part series looking back at the era. How radical was the New Deal? What was its legacy? And what does it have to tell us about how we might approach our problems today?

EXPERIENCING HISTORY

With much of Britain adapting to a 'new normal', museums and historical spaces are continuing to reopen their doors

MUST SEE

Axe heads, razors and sword fragments are among the hundreds of unearthed treasures

Havering Hoard: A Bronze Age Mystery

MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS

Until 18 April 2021
bit.ly/35igugq

The largest Bronze Age hoard ever found in London is going on display to the public for the first time. Uncovered in Havering in 2018, the hundreds of objects unearthed, including weapons and tools, date between c900 and c800 BC. It seems they were deliberately placed near the Thames, which has left archaeologists asking who buried them and why. Were they a religious offering or were they simply discarded as the use of iron technology grew?

All 453 objects will be on display, allowing visitors to piece together a glimpse of what life would have been like in the Late Bronze Age, where modern London now stands. Entry to the exhibition is free, but a timed ticket must be booked online beforehand. Tickets are available up to six weeks in advance. The museum is open Monday to Friday, 11.30am–3.30pm, and 10am 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays. While a cafe is available, the museum's indoor lunch spaces remain closed.

This rare terret ring would have prevented the reins of a horse cart from tangling

A loomweight, spindle whorl and pin used for weaving

WHEN VISITING MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SPACES, PLEASE FOLLOW OFFICIAL SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES AND FACE-COVERING RULES
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DAVID PARRY/PA WIRE X2, MUSEUM OF LONDON/THOMAS LAYTON TRUST X1, WAYNE PERRY X2, GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

A collection of 19th-century ship figureheads greets visitors at the entrance of The Box

A new Wampum belt has been made to commemorate the shared history with the Wampanoag people

Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy

THE BOX, PLYMOUTH

29 September 2020 – 18 September 2021
bit.ly/3m0VpwN

In 1620, the *Mayflower* reached the New World carrying the Pilgrims who would establish the colony of Plymouth. The Box, a new museum in Plymouth (UK), has created a flagship exhibition to explore the story of this historic ship. It will delve into the *Mayflower*'s legacy and the impact of the settlers on the indigenous population. The exhibition is £5 and tickets must be booked in advance. The Box is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am–5pm. (For more on the *Mayflower* story, turn to page 16.)

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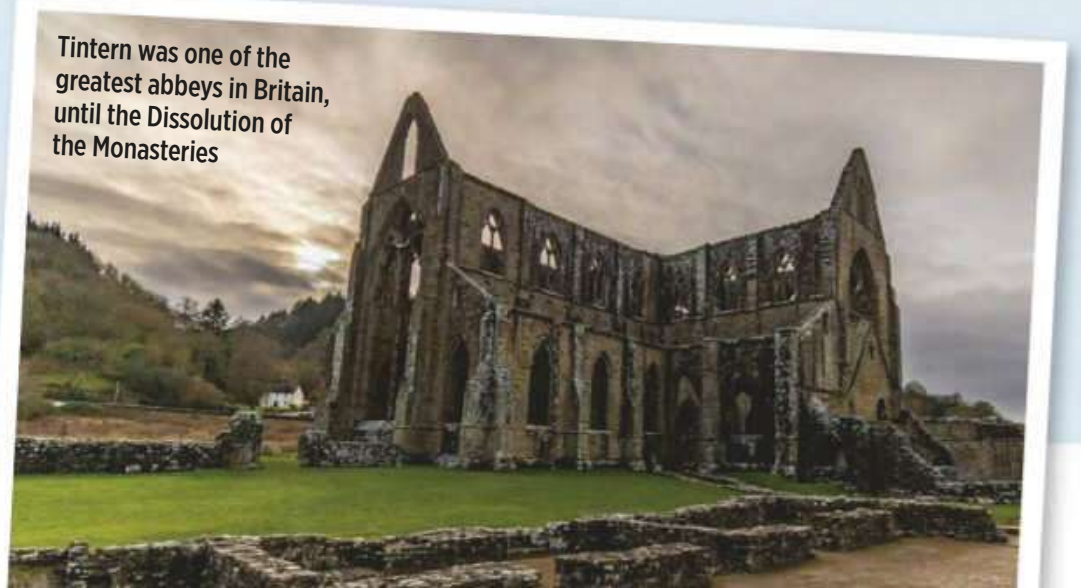
Now open
bit.ly/3jQBu1A

A national icon for Wales, Tintern Abbey still stands roofless 500 years after its destruction during Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Founded by Cistercian monks in 1131, Tintern would become one of Britain's greatest Gothic masterpieces, and its romantic ruins have enchanted visitors for centuries, inspiring writers and artists such as William Wordsworth, Jane Austen and JMW Turner. The abbey is open from Wednesday to Sunday, 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm. Timed tickets must be booked online in advance: adults £5 and children £2.30. CADW members enter for free.



Tintern was one of the greatest abbeys in Britain, until the Dissolution of the Monasteries

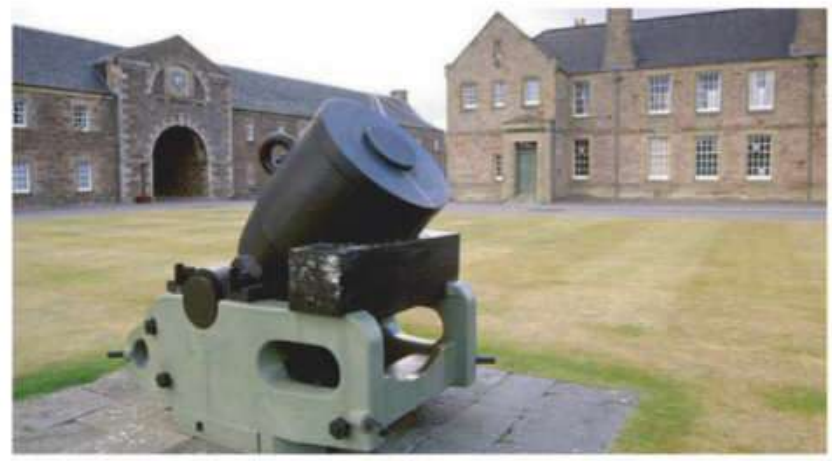
NEWCASTLE CASTLE

NEWCASTLE

Now open
bit.ly/3m2LMxG

The medieval fortification that puts the 'castle' in Newcastle is opening its doors to the public again. Built in the 12th century by Henry II, the distinctive stone structure was erected on the site of a Norman motte and bailey castle, which in turn replaced a Roman fort. It became a major stronghold in northern England, standing strong as wars raged between England and Scotland. The castle was besieged during the Civil War when Scottish forces crossed the border in support of the Parliamentarians. The castle is open on Mondays and Thursday to Sunday from 10am–5pm. Tickets must be booked online or by phone beforehand. Admission is £8.50 for adults and £5 for children.

The site of the not-so-new castle in the heart of Newcastle city centre has been used for defence since the time of the Romans



This imposing fort was built to repel a Jacobite uprising

Fort George

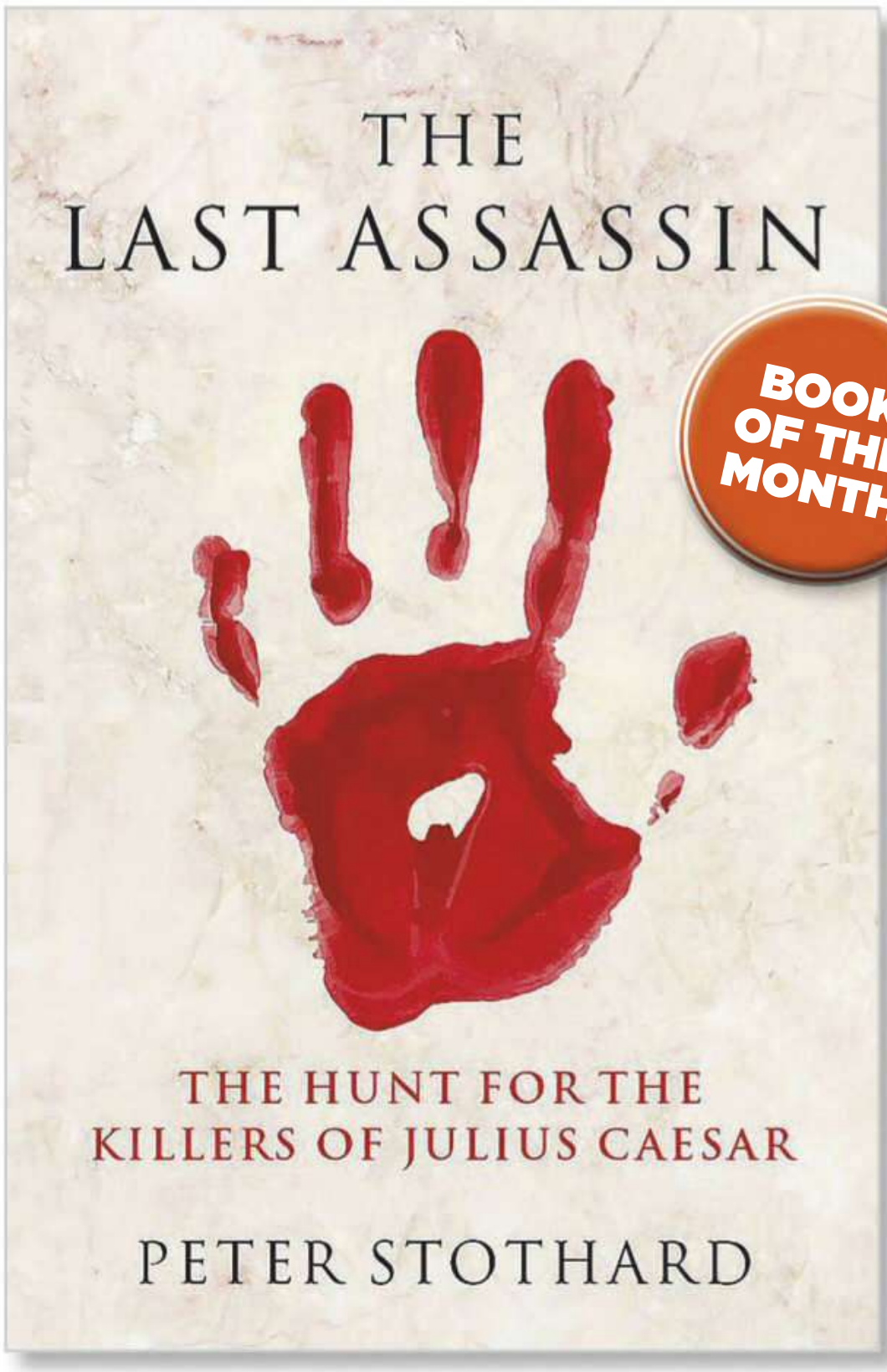
NEAR ARDERSIER, INVERNESS

Now open
bit.ly/2ZfmRNG

In the wake of the 1746 Battle of Culloden, Fort George was built by George II to control the Scottish Highlands and took 22 years to build. The Jacobite threat had subsided by the time the fort was completed, but it still served the British Army for the next 250 years. The nearby Highlanders' Museum tells the story of the Highland Regiment. Tickets must be booked in advance. Historic Scotland members visit for free, adults £9 and children £5.40. The fort is open daily between 10am and 4pm. The Fort George Story and mobility scooter/wheelchair hire are currently unavailable.

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS



The Last Assassin: The Hunt for the Killers of Julius Caesar

By Peter Stothard
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20, hardback, 288 pages

Cassius Parmensis's name may be unfamiliar today, but his place in history is assured: he was one of the men responsible for the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. This dynamic account explores his motives for taking part in the Ides of March, the dogged attempts of Caesar's adopted son to bring his father's killers to bloody justice, and the wider world in which this narrative unfolds. If you're a fan of Ancient Rome with all its politics, violence and intrigue this promises to offer a lesser-known twist on a familiar story.

Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture

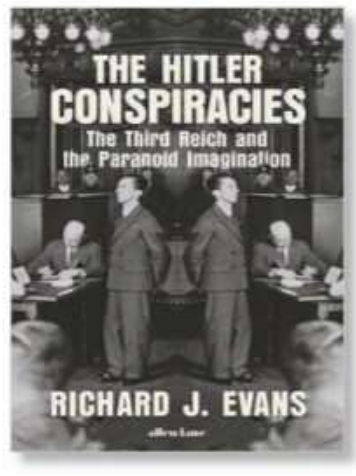
By Sudhir Hazareesingh
Allen Lane, £25, hardback, 464 pages

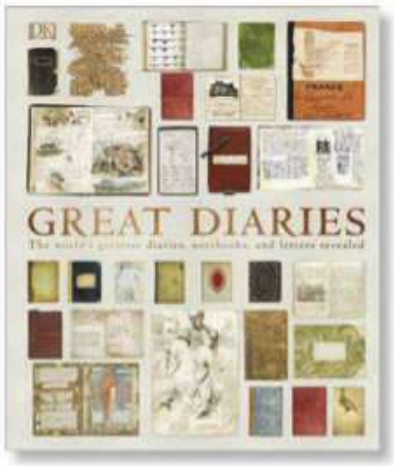
Toussaint Louverture's life was epic: born a slave in the 1740s, he was freed in his thirties and became a man of great learning, industriousness and bravery. As a general in Haiti, he overthrew French imperialists and turned a slave uprising into a revolutionary movement. These actions, and his charisma, inspired enslaved people around the world a remarkable story here captivatingly told.

The Hitler Conspiracies: The Third Reich and the Paranoid Imagination

By Richard J Evans
Allen Lane, £20, hardback, 288 pages

With conspiracy theories on the rise, from talk of 'alternative facts' to the frenzied imagination of online paranoiacs, this is an insightful, refreshing look at the reality behind some of the wilder stories around Hitler's Nazi regime. Each chapter addresses a specific issue was the burning of the Reichstag in 1933 really a political setup? Did Hitler really escape the bunker? and all are considered with the same scholarly clarity by a leading expert in the field.





Great Diaries: The World's Most Remarkable Diaries, Journals, Notebooks and Letters

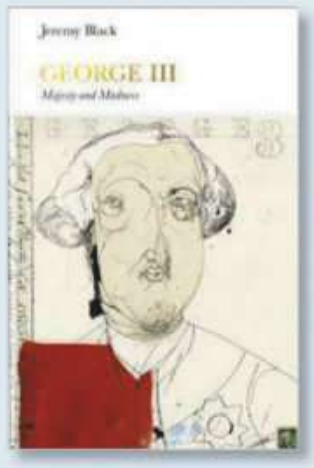
By Dorling Kindersley, foreword by Kate Williams
DK, £20, hardback, 256 pages

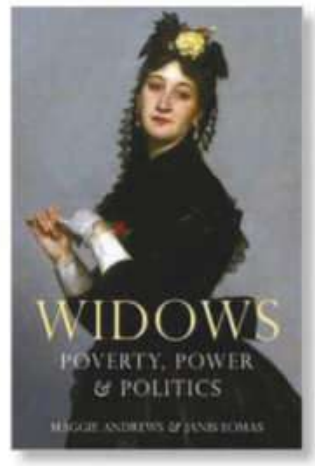
This is a lushly illustrated look at the personal writing of some of the past's great thinkers, from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Charles Darwin to Frida Kahlo and Anne Lister. It's a diverse, varied list, ranging the centuries and continents, from 11th century Japan to World War II, and the journals, notebooks and letters reproduced offer genuine insights into lives lived in other places and other times.

George III: Majesty and Madness

By Jeremy Black
Allen Lane, £14.99, hardback, 144 pages

Poor, doomed George III: not only was his later life defined by debilitating mental illness, but so too have accounts of his reign. This concise, incisive biography paints a more comprehensive picture, setting the king's life in the context of the upheavals of the period. And what a period 1760 to 1820 was, as rebellion emerged in Ireland, revolution unfolded in Europe, and Britain lost the American War of Independence.





Widows: Poverty, Power and Politics

By Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas
The History Press, £20, hardback, 240 pages

How did women rebuild their lives after the death of their husbands in societies unable or unwilling to afford them the same status that their lives would once have provided? That's the question at the heart of this fascinating book. The search for an answer journeys from royal court to inner city streets, and reveals a more complex story than the stereotypes suggest. The constant focus here are moving stories of real women, who had to navigate both their own emotions and the cultural and political expectations of those around them.

HistoryExtra Podcast

Each month we bring you three of our favourite interviews from the HistoryExtra podcast archives...

Visit historyextra.com/podcast for new podcasts every week

THIS MONTH... three podcasts on black British history

Britain and the Slave Trade

bit.ly/BritainSlaveTradePod

To what extent was the British Empire powered by slaves? In this episode, broadcast in June 2020, historian Christer Petley explores the role of enslaved people in Britain's success in the 18th and 19th centuries, and considers how we should remember it today.

Black Tudors

bit.ly/BlackTudorsPod

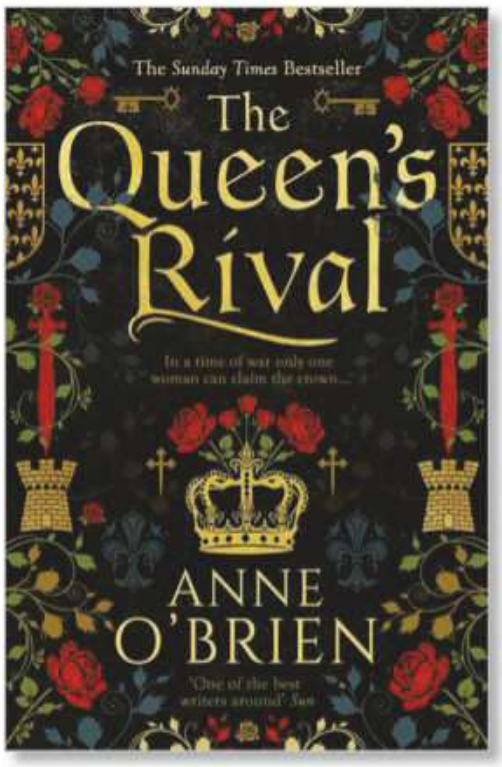
Historian and writer Miranda Kaufmann tells the little known stories of the lives and legacies of black people in Britain during the Tudor period in this 2017 episode from the court musician who persuaded Henry VIII to give him a handsome pay rise, to the family man who profited from high society's passion for silk stockings.

Migrating to Britain

bit.ly/MigratingToBritainPod

In the years following World War II, people from around the world headed to Britain in the hopes of finding a new life, and they ended up changing the face of the nation in the process. Clair Wills of Princeton University charts some of their stories in this 2017 interview, including those of the many thousands of black people who came to call the UK their home.

HISTORICAL FICTION....



The Queen's Rival

By Anne O'Brien
HarperCollins, £18.99

England, 1459: during the devastating chaos of the Wars of the Roses, one of history's forgotten women will attempt to secure her family's place in history and claim the throne. Cecily Neville is the wife of Richard, 3rd Duke of York then the leading Yorkist contender for the English throne. She can only watch as her family are torn apart after their defeat at the Battle of Ludford Bridge, and she is left to face her enemy alone as her husband flees. While imprisoned, Cecily bides her time, conjuring up a treacherous plan to topple Henry VI and ensure that her son will go on to become Edward IV.

Excerpt

Reading, September 1464.
After months of fruitful negotiations to wed her son, King Edward IV, to the illustrious Bona of Savoy, Duchess Cecily discovers that the king is already secretly married – to a commoner, Elizabeth Woodville

Edward, King of England, stood before me.

'Where is she?'

'Who?'

'Do not be obtuse, Edward.'

I could not address him as Ned. There was no maternal affection within me.

His eyes widened with just the hint of the temper that he rarely showed to me.

'You refer to my wife, Madam.'

A little silence fell, broken only by a squawk from the popinjay that had been consigned to the corner of the room. I ignored the wine poured and presented to me. Rejected the delicacy of fried fig pastries he had ordered to sweeten my mood. There would be no sweetening here.

'What have you done, Edward? What in God's name have you done?'

Replacing the cup on the salver, my son stood foursquare before me. He had known that he would have to face this conversation with me. They said that he was charismatic in his treatment of women. There was no doubting it. His smile could have melted winter ice.

'I have entered into a marriage. Was that not what you had been commanding me to do since the day that I became King?'

The truth of this stirred my anger to a new level of heat.

Q&A
Anne O'Brien

Anne O'Brien is a *Sunday Times* bestselling author who has written extensively on the medieval period, as well as the British Civil War and Regency eras. Before becoming a successful writer, Anne was a history teacher. She lives in the Welsh Marches of Herefordshire.

What is it about Cecily Neville that made you want to write about her?
Cecily Neville is one of the most enigmatic of medieval English women, known for her piety but overshadowed by a dangerous scandal that could have brought down the House of York. A formidable woman, she lived for 80 years, interacting with the infamous and influential figures through the tumult of the Wars of the Roses. Cecily demanded to be allowed to speak for herself.

Why do you think she has often been neglected in discussions of the Wars of the Roses?
The wars, by the nature of warfare, were dominated by men. Cecily has been eclipsed by other notable women: Margaret Beaufort, Elizabeth Woodville, Margaret of Anjou. Yet Cecily stood at the centre of a powerful family alliance of Nevilles and Plantagenets. She doesn't deserve to be neglected.

What would you like readers to take from your book?
The Wars of the Roses can be written as a clash of ambition between powerful adversaries for the English crown. But it's also a story of family: the joys, heartaches and tragedies of family life. This is what I would like readers to enjoy, the personal nature of it, within the cut and thrust of bloody politics.

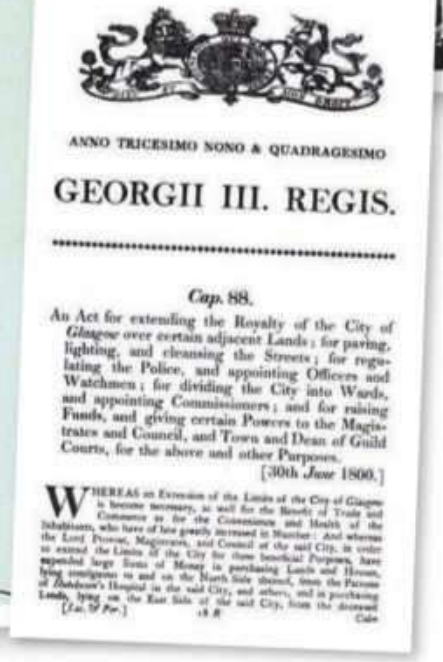
What is your writing and research process like?
First, I place my characters into their historical settings, with detailed interlinked timelines. Then I write one of the dramatic scenes to get a sense of historic place and character. Because I write about the people who lived through these events, I take care to be subtle on historical detail, but heavy on characterisation and relationships.

Is there a period of history or a figure that you've always wanted to write about but haven't yet?
The Earl of Warwick, Richard Neville, intrigues me. Known as the Kingmaker, he was a man of talent and political acumen, overlaid with an ambition that in the end destroyed him.

What advice would you give to students who want to develop their love of history?
Visit ruined castles, stately houses, tiny churches, magnificent cathedrals and windswept battlefields. Touch the stonework and absorb the atmosphere. Linger silently on a battlefield where so many ambitions were fought out. It brings history to life.

LETTERS

A Glasgow policeman of 1800. The Glasgow Police Act (*far right*) was passed 29 years before the establishment of the Metropolitan Police Force



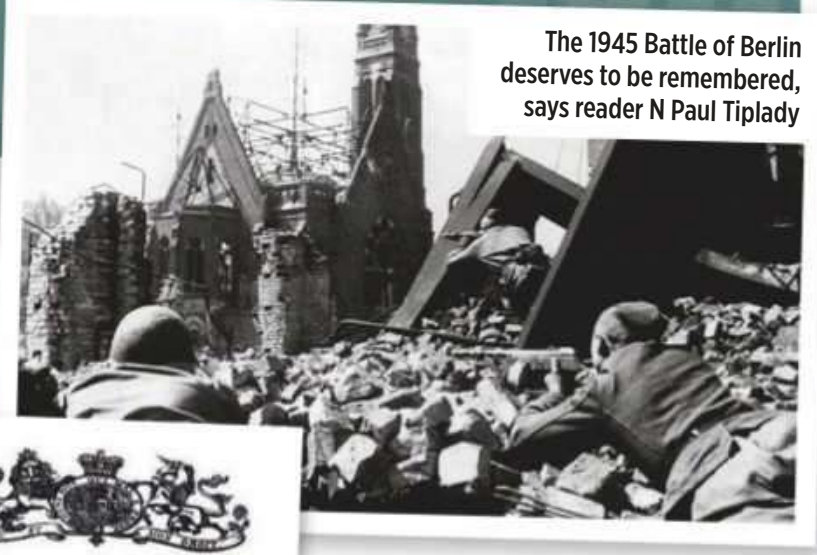
ANNO TRICESIMO NONO & QUADRAGESIMO

GEORGII III. REGIS.

Cap. 88.

An Act for extending the Royalty of the City of *Glasgow* over certain adjacent Lands; for paving, lighting, and cleansing the Streets; for regulating the Police, and appointing Officers and Watchmen; for dividing the City into Wards, and appointing Commissioners; and for raising Funds, and giving certain Powers to the Magistrates and Council, and Town and Dean of Guild Courts, for the above and other Purposes.

[30th *June* 1800.]



The 1945 Battle of Berlin deserves to be remembered, says reader N Paul Tiplady

SCOTTISH POLICING

After reading your piece on crime and punishment in the Victorian era (October 2020), which referred to the beginnings of London's Metropolitan Police Force, I wanted to let you know that the first police forces in Great Britain were actually established long before Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police Act of 1829. The Glasgow Police Act was passed in 1800; maybe this also explains why there have been so many Scots in English police forces.

Brian Frost, by email

Editor's reply:

Whilst sitting just outside the timeframe for our 'Essential Guide to the Victorians', you're right that Scotland's long history of policing deserves a mention.

Glasgow's police force first took to the streets in 1789 and was formally recognised in 1800 with the Glasgow Police Act – Britain's first such Act. On 29 September that year, city merchant John Stenhouse was appointed Master of Police – he initially recruited three sergeants and six police officers. Elsewhere, in Ireland, the Constabulary Act of 1822 saw the establishment of a system of county constabularies, which was followed, in 1836, by the introduction of a single police force – the Constabulary of Ireland.

WWII BATTLES

I enjoyed your article by Evan Mawdsley in October's issue ('The 11 Most Significant Battles of World War II'). In addition to the 11 battles outlined in the article, I'd like to suggest the Battle of Berlin [16 April–2 May 1945] which, despite the imploding Third Reich, was by no means a 'given' victory for the USSR.

Stalin's army had to throw an immense tonnage of shells and armoury at the remnants of Hitler's former capital city. He may by then have killed himself, but everyone from young boys to elderly men were recruited to defend the 'Fatherland'. Just watching some of the video footage of the battle online is terrifying; there's every likelihood the war would have gone on for years longer if the Soviet army hadn't thrown everything at it!

N Paul Tiplady, by email

Evan Mawdsley replies:

I can understand why the Battle of Berlin might be included among the most significant battles of World War II. As mentioned at the beginning of the piece, 'significant' can mean different things.

The forces of the USSR, rather than those of the 'western' Allies, captured Hitler's capital, and this fact would have great psychological and political significance in Central and Eastern Europe over the next 45 years. Nevertheless, my opinion is that there was no way – given the strategic situation in the spring of 1945 – that American or British troops could have reached Berlin first. In addition, I was looking at battles as turning points in military terms, where the outcome – one way or the other – determined later events. There was no way Hitler's armies, little more than phantoms in mid-April 1945, could have held Berlin, and no way in which the Red Army 'Berlin operation' could have been defeated. Despite the newsreels, the 'mopping up' in Berlin itself lasted only a few days (26 April to 2 May), and the critical forces involved were the Soviet tank armies that had surrounded the city in the preceding week.

CROSSWORD WINNERS

The five lucky winners of the crossword from issue 84 are:

Gwyn Davies, Salford; R Beckett, London; Jill Fuller, Shaftesbury; B Whitlock, Towcester; Stephen Clarke, London

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Blooming Flowers,* by Kasia Bodd

Please note, there will be a delay in posting your prize.

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GLASGOW POLICE MUSEUM X2, GETTY IMAGES X1

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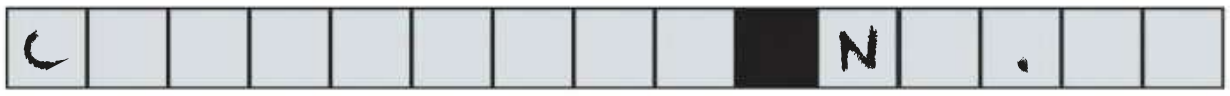


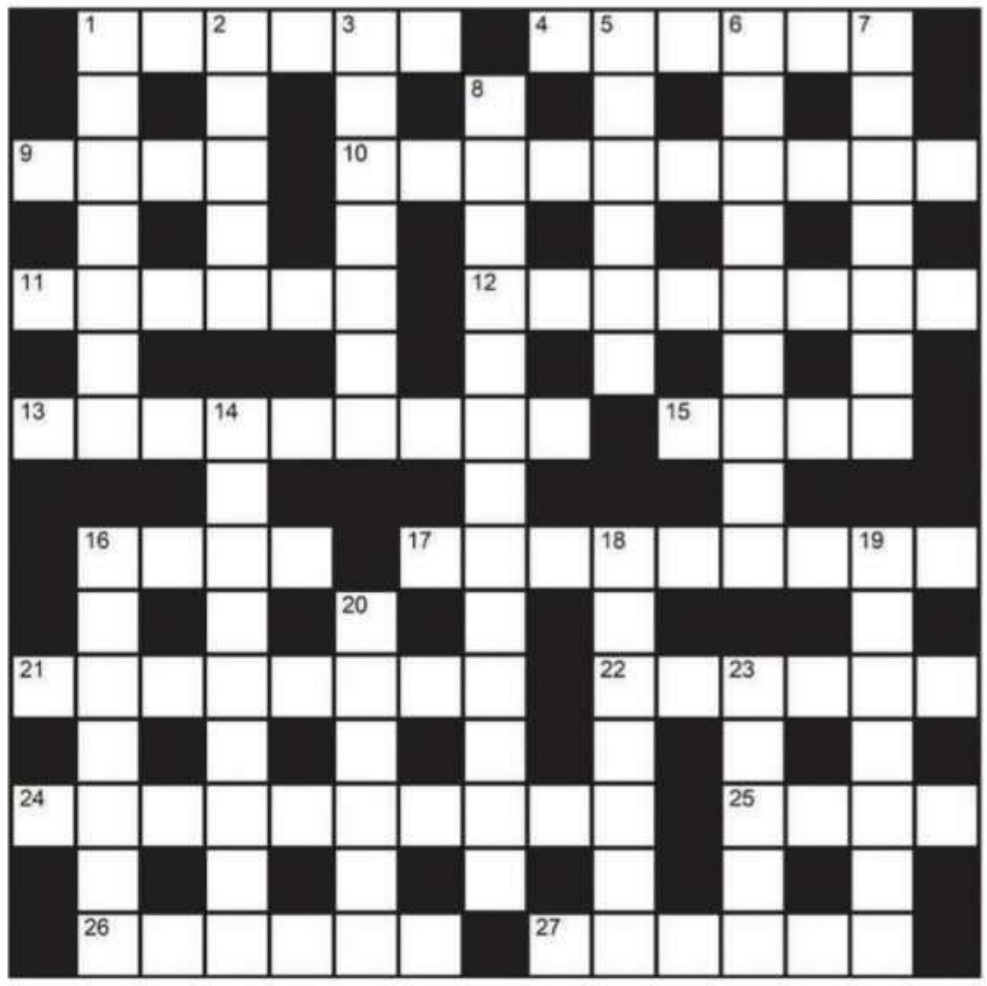
Test your history knowledge to solve our prize puzzle – and you could win a fantastic new book

ACROSS

1 "I am not a ___!" – Patrick McGoohan, The Prisoner (1967) (6)
4 US state, admitted to the Union in January, 1861 (6)
9 Ship of Jason, in Greek myth (4)
10 ___ Matter, anti-racism slogan coined in 2013 (5,5)
11 Large human settlements (6)
12 Shakespeare tragedy (4,4)
13 "Violence is a part of America's culture. It is as American as ___" – H Rap Brown, 1967 (6,3)
15 William Howard ___ (1857–1930), 27th President of the United States (4)
16 City of Tuscany, famed for its leaning campanile (4)
17 Location in Egypt, site of two major battles in 1942 (2,7)
21 Andrew ___ (1858–1923), shortest-serving British Prime Minister of the 20th century (5,3)
22 Country of which Milton Obote was president from 1966 to 1971 (6)
24 1988 legal drama starring Jodie Foster (3,7)
25 Kensington ___, Barbados cricket ground founded in 1871 (4)
26 Disputed island of east Asia, ruled by Japan from 1895 to 1945 (6)
27 Former name of Nur-Sultan, the capital of Kazakhstan (6)

DOWN

1 Julian of ___ (1342–c1416), English anchorite (7)
2 Indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand (5)
3 Diplomatic mission (7)
5 Tommy ___, archetypal British soldier in World War I (6)
6 Not the sword arm (6,3)
7 Sir Jackie ___ (b1939), Scottish racing driver (7)
8 Vita ___ (1892–1962), English author and garden designer (9,4)
14 Politico-religious movement centred around the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I (9)
16 Divine intermediary, such as Muhammad, Jeremiah or Abraham (7)
18 Site of Christian pilgrimage in the south of France (7)
19 The Hoosier State (7)
20 *My Friend* ___, 1941 novel by Mary O'Hara about a boy and his horse (6)
23 Public space in ancient Greece (5)



Set by Richard Smyth

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A History Of Magic, Witchcraft & The Occult
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SOLUTION Nº 85

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NEXT ISSUE

••• ON SALE 29 OCTOBER •••

HENRY VIII AND HIS WIVES

Discover the complicated love life of one of history's most famous monarchs. Who were the six women he famously wed and what did Henry *really* want from a wife? Find out in our essential guide...

PLUS...

WHAT IF THE GUNPOWDER PLOT HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL? THE ASSASSINATION OF THOMAS BECKET **MEDIEVAL MAGIC** IN A NUTSHELL: THE HOLOCAUST **AND MUCH MORE...**

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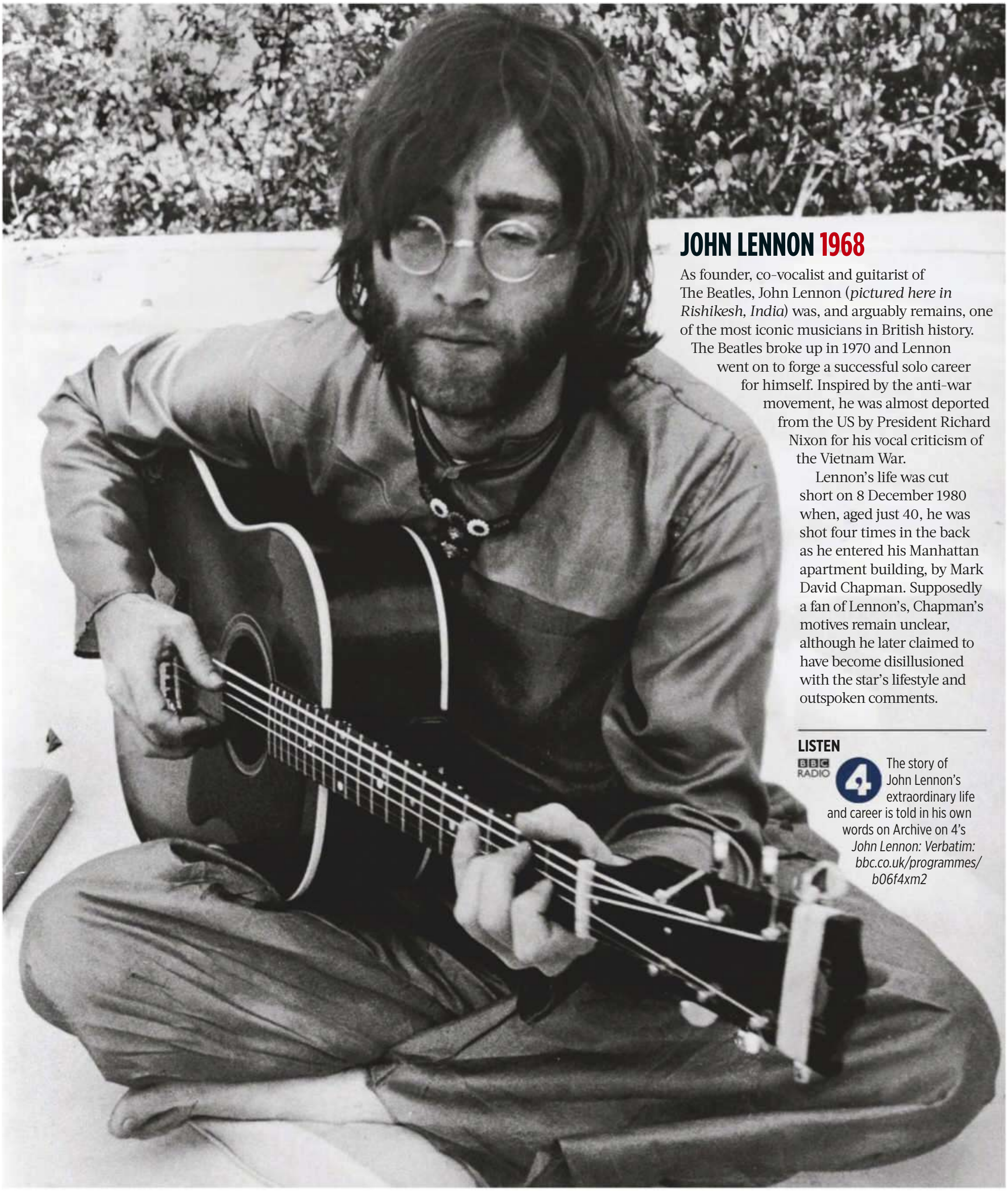

GETTY IMAGES

JOHN LENNON 1968

As founder, co-vocalist and guitarist of The Beatles, John Lennon (*pictured here in Rishikesh, India*) was, and arguably remains, one of the most iconic musicians in British history.

The Beatles broke up in 1970 and Lennon went on to forge a successful solo career for himself. Inspired by the anti-war movement, he was almost deported from the US by President Richard Nixon for his vocal criticism of the Vietnam War.

Lennon's life was cut short on 8 December 1980 when, aged just 40, he was shot four times in the back as he entered his Manhattan apartment building, by Mark David Chapman. Supposedly a fan of Lennon's, Chapman's motives remain unclear, although he later claimed to have become disillusioned with the star's lifestyle and outspoken comments.

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BBC RADIO 4

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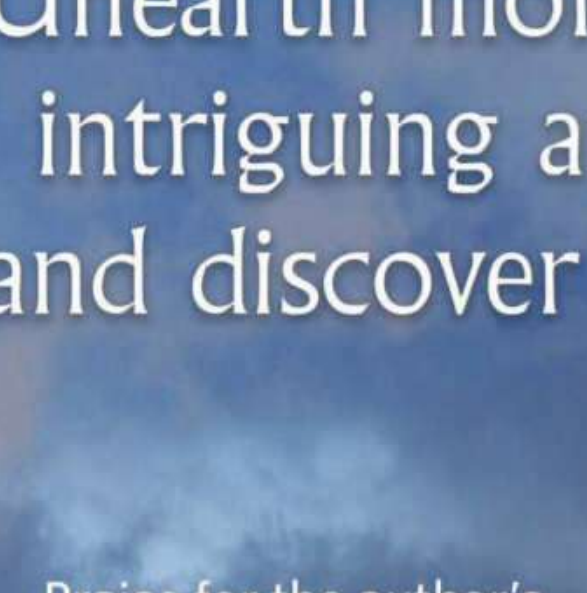
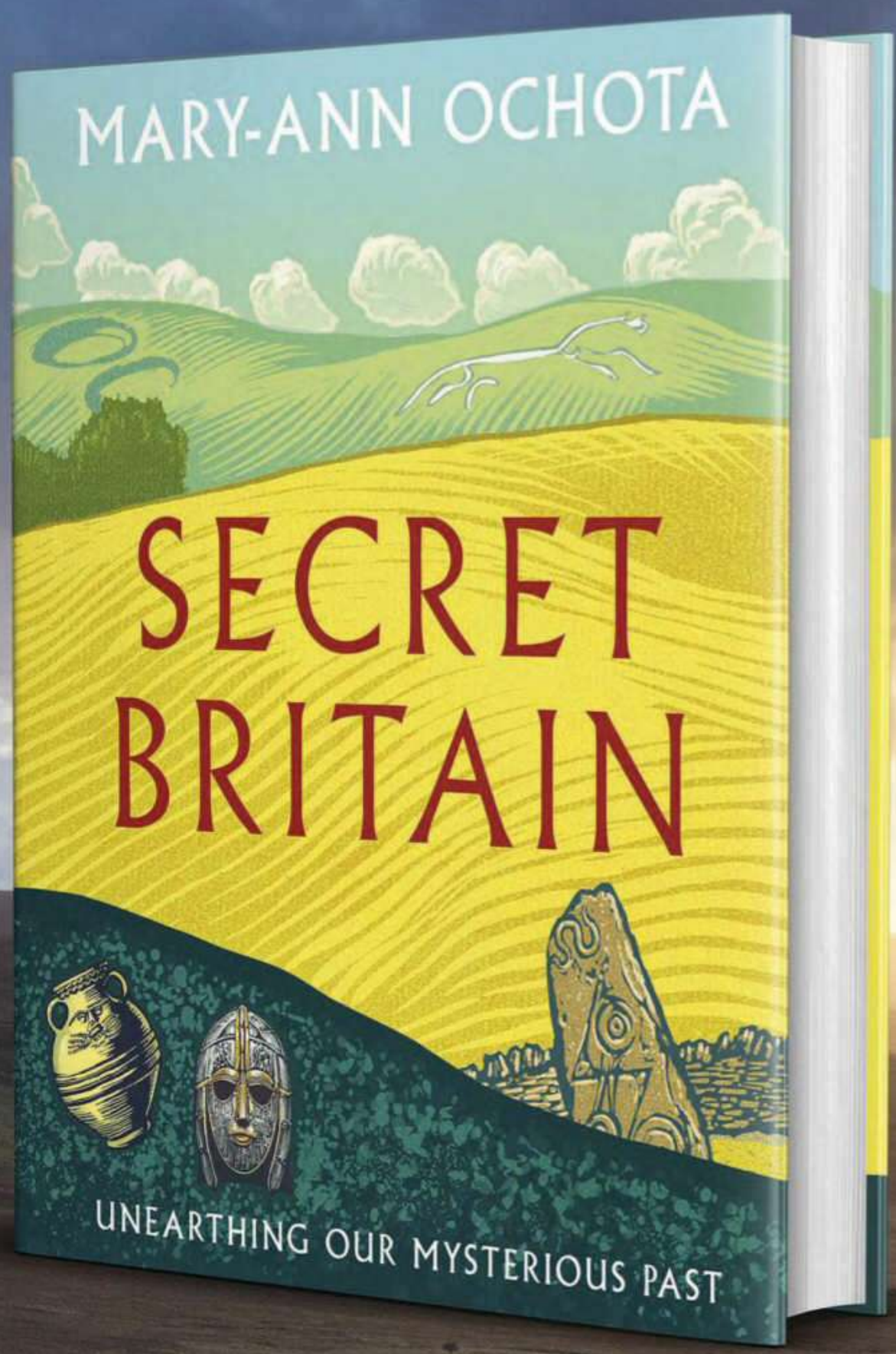


From Archaeologist and anthropologist,
Mary-Ann Ochota



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